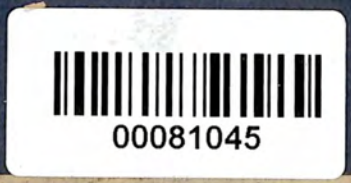
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HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN ART.

BY LORD LINDSAY.

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SKETCHES

OF THE

HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN ART.

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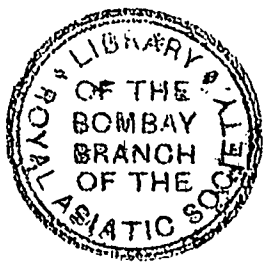
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LETTER V.

SCHOOL OF SIENA.

RISE AND RESTORATION OF PAINTING, IN CONNEXION WITH GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE—CONTEMPLATIVE—PREPARATION FOR FRA ANGELICO AND PERUGINO.

We have still to trace the development of the Contemplative principle in the school of Siena, and in the Florentine painters, Orcagna and Fra Angelico, the heirs and transmitters of the mystical enthusiasm of the Byzantines and of the early Church,—a less numerous but most interesting race, whose spirit, inherited by Donatello more especially of the two great Tuscan sculptors, and by him communicated to Verrocchio, descended through that channel to Leonard da Vinci, Perugino and Raphael, and, partly at least, to Michael Angelo, whose oceanic mind alternately lashed the stars or undulated peacefully and still, as I have seen the waters glassing themselves for days together under the shadow of Mount Ida.

Respecting Siena, indeed, and her school of Painting, you are already familiar with much that I

should otherwise have been obliged to touch upon here,—her rise as a political state long before Florence, the origin of her school, responsive to the regenerating impulse of Niccola Pisano, at a period when Giotto was still a student under Cimabue,—on the one hand, her Ghibelline politics, her enthusiastic devotion to the Virgin, especially after the battle of Monte-Aperto, and her generally exalted sense and feeling of religion; on the other, her corresponding tendency in art to the abstractive, symbolical, allegorical and lyrical, rather than the dramatic, inducing, by a natural sympathy, a closer adherence to the old traditional compositions, and a stronger infusion of the spirit of Christian Greece, in its purest form, than we observe in any other school of Italy except the Umbrian. I have also noticed the loftier and more dignified view taken of their art by the Sienese painters in the Statutes of their Company or Association, drawn up (originally) towards the close of the thirteenth century:—It is at this precise period that Mino and Duccio flourished, the earliest of those painters in whom the influence of Niccola Pisano, and the consequent adoption of the central principle of Christian art, are recognisable. With these artists, therefore, we will commence our examination of the school.—Whether Ugolino, the last of the Semi-Byzantine succession from Guido, ought to be ranked beside them, depends on the testimony of the altar-pieces of S. Croce and S. Maria Novella at Florence, now for many years missing; neither the Madonna of Orsanmichele, beautiful as it is, nor any

of the works attributed to him at Siena and elsewhere, justifying such a classification.*

SECTION 1.—*The Fathers of the School, Mino and Duccio.*

OF Mino—more fully designated Ser Mino di Simone† — the 'Maestà,' or Madonna — painted in fresco in 1287,‡ when Giotto was only thirteen years old, in the palace of the Podestà, on a wall subsequently incorporated into the Palazzo Pubblico in such a manner that it now forms the western extremity of the Sala del Consiglio,§ is the sole authentic relic. It reminds one, in its grandeur, of the mosaics of Mino's namesake and contemporary, the Franciscan of Turrita. But the identity of these

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* Of Ugolino and his predecessors, the immediate successors of Guido, I have spoken *supra*, tom. ii, p.69, *note*.

† In 1298 he is designed 'Minuccio,' (*Lettere Sanesi*, tom. i, p. 290,)—the diminutive of a diminutive—*Minuccio*, *Mino*, Giacomino, Giacomo. The Sienese of the middle ages were noted for their love of diminutives. *Ibid.* p. 282.

‡ See the 'Lettere Sanesi,' tom. i, p. 290. The fresco had been finished before the 12th of August, 1289, when nineteen "*lire*" were paid "a Maestro Mino Pittore, il quale dipense la Vergine Maria e altri Sancti nel Palazzo del Commune nella Sala del Consiglio, per resto di lire 22 che doveva avere per detta opera." *Ibid.*

§ "Prima del 1287, il Podestà di Siena abitava nel Palazzo del Bolgano, in cui ora abita il Capitano di Giustizia, essendo stato rimodernato. Ma siccome un muro del Bolgano, dalla parte del Colegio Tolomei era forte, e non gustavasene il disegno, si unì alla nuova fabbrica, e così conservossi la pittura di Mino su quello esistente." *Lett. Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 178.

artists, assumed originally by Dellavalle,* is disproved by irresistible evidence.†

The composition covers the whole extremity of the hall; the Virgin sits enthroned under a *baldacchino*, or canopy, supported by the twelve Apostles and the tutelary Saints of Siena; the child Jesus stands on her knee, looking straight forwards, blessing with his right hand, and holding in his left the charter by which the city was gifted to his Mother before the battle of Monte-Aperto,—both figures are full of majesty and dignity; two angels, kneeling in front of the throne, offer them lilies. The whole is enclosed within a magnificent fresco framework of medallions and ornament.‡ The Virgin is crowned, the type of her face Byzantine, but in the noblest sense of the epithet; the colouring, on the contrary, is much lighter than the Greek, and bears the strongest resemblance to that of Simon di Memmo, pupil, it is believed, of Mino, and who repainted the whole fresco except the two principal figures; to these, therefore, Mino's praise must be restricted, and to the general merit of the composition,—unless, indeed, as I suspect, it had descended traditionally from some earlier artist; not merely Mino's scholars, but his contemporary and rival, Duccio himself,

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* *Lettere Sanesi*, tom. i, pp. 288, *sqq.*

† By the death of the mosaicist at least ten years before the painter.

‡ For a minute description see Dellavalle, *Lett. Sanesi*, tom. i, p. 291. The Virgin and child are engraved in Rosini's 'Storia della Pittura,' tav. 6.

seeming to have considered it as a common heritage of Sienese art.*

A long poetical inscription, partly obliterated, runs along the base of the fresco; this is one of the most pleasing characteristics of the Semi-Byzantine or Contemplative schools; poetry and art thus play into each other's hands in happiest unison. Sometimes, however, and even here, such inscriptions are intruded into the field of the composition, and even issue in cartels from the lips of the personages represented,—a most objectionable licence, although it is wonderful how readily the taste reconciles itself to it.†

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* It was repeated, as we shall see, with little variation, by Duccio in 1310, in his great altarpiece for the Cathedral,—in 1317 by M. Lippo di Memmo in the Sala del Consiglio at S. Gimignano,—and subsequently in a picture by Simon di Memmo, now lost, described by Ghiberti and Vasari. It may have descended to Mino either from Diotisalvi or Guido, the chiefs of the Semi-Byzantine school of Siena, anterior to the influence of Niccola Pisano.

† Under the feet of the Virgin were inscribed the following lines:—

"Li angelichi fioretti, rose e gigli,
Onde s' adorna lo celeste prato,
Non mi dilectan più che i buon consigli;
Ma talor veggio chi per proprio stato
Disprezza me, e la mia terra inganna,
E quanto parla peggio è più lodato,—
Guardi ciascun cui questo dir condanna!" [a]

—The scrolls held by the surrounding Saints expressed their

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[a] "The angelic flowers, the lily and the rose,
That heaven's bright meadow decks herself withal,
Delight me not more than good counsels do;
But sometimes see I who for selfish gain
Despise me, and my common-wealth betray,
Winning, the worse they speak, the louder praise,—
Take each one heed, whom this my word condemns!"

No notice occurs of Mino subsequently to 1303,* —he probably died young; his name was forgotten; the Maestà, as early as Ghiberti's time, was attributed solely to Simon, its restorer; nor was it till the close of last century that the researches of Della-valle established its true filiation, enabling me thus to vindicate Mino's dignity as the patriarch of one of the two great rival branches of the school of Siena.

Very different has been the fate of Duccio,† one

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prayers for the prosperity of Siena, to which the Virgin replied as follows:—

" Diletti miei, ponete nelle menti,
Che li devoti vostri preghi onesti
Come vorrete voi farò contenti,—
Ma se i potenti a' debil fien molesti,
Gravando loro o con vergogna o danni,
Le vostre orazion non son par questi,
Ne per qualunque la mia terra inganni." (a)

—*Lettere Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 284, from a MS. letter of the Cav. Benvoglienti, dated 1701; and Rosini, *Storia, &c.*, tom. i. p. 213.

* According to Romagnoli, cited by Rosini, tom. ii, p. 40.—Dellavalle found no notice of him subsequent to the payment to "Minuccio Pittore" in 1298. *Lett. Sanesi*, tom. i, p. 290.

† A name contracted either from Orlanduccio or Guiduccio, augmentatives of Orlando and Guido. He is described as "Duccius pictor olim Boninsegne civis Senesis," in the contract, presently to be noticed, for the great altar-piece of the Duomo.—According to Tizio, who settled at Siena in 1482, and compiled a history of the republic still preserved there in manuscript, he

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a " Sons of my love, the prayerful and the pure!
Deem it for truth, your prayers are heard in heaven,—
I will content ye to your hearts' desire;
But if the son of power oppress the weak,
Crushing him down with injury or shame,
For him, and such as him, your prayers are vain,
Or for whoe'er my common-wealth betray."

of those happy mortals whom countrymen and foreigners, contemporaries and posterity, have alike delighted to honour. He figures as a painter as early as 1282,* and must have been of established reputation in 1285, when engaged to paint a large picture, in competition with Cimabue, for S. Maria Novella at Florence.† This indeed has disappeared, but the great altar-piece executed twenty-three years later for the cathedral of his native town still sur-

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was pupil of a painter named 'Segnia.' *L. Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 68.—'M. Segna di Bonaventura' is proved to have painted in 1305, in 1314, in 1316, and as late as 1327. *Ibid.* tom. ii, pp. 70, 235, and Romagnoli, as cited by Rosini, tom. ii, p. 29.—A picture in the Academy, representing four Saints in compartments, of much merit, and engraved by Rosini, tom. ii, p. 28, is signed "Segna me fecit," but is certainly in a later style than that of Duccio. Possibly therefore there may have been two painters of the name, unless indeed we may suppose that Tizio mistook the name of Duccio's father, 'Boninsegna,' for that of his supposed master.—A Virgin and child—the Greek face very sweet—and highly finished—painted by order of the Great Council, 16 October, 1319, by M. Buonaventura, may be seen in the church of the Concezione, over the door of the corridor leading to the Cathedral,—possibly he may have been the father or master of the M. Segna, who flourished between 1305 and 1327.

* When he was paid eight *soldi* for a painting in the 'libri del Camerlingho,' *L. Sanesi*, tom. i, p. 277.

† Contract, dated 5 April, 1285, cited by Rosini, *Storia, &c.*, tom. i, p. 223. It represented the Virgin and child with attendant Saints.—The Annunciation, painted by Duccio, according to Vasari, for the church of the Trinità at Florence, is now lost. The Baron von Rumohr cites payments to Duccio on the 8th October, 1285, and in 1290 and 1291, for paintings in the books of the Chamberlain at Siena, and in December, 1302, for a *tavola*, or Maestà, and its predella; in this for the first time he is designed 'Maestro.' *Ital. Forschungen*, tom. ii, p. 11.

vives, though in a sadly mutilated condition. The contract between the Operajo and the painter, dated the 9th of October, 1308, a most interesting document, has been printed by Dellavalle; it confirms what Mancini tells us of Duccio's religious and patriotic character;* he pledges himself to execute the picture "to his best ability, and as the Lord shall give him cunning," and to devote himself entirely to the task until it be accomplished. His remuneration is to be sixteen soldi per day, for every day that he may work upon it, the colours and other materials to be provided by his employers. And to the fulfilment of this engagement he binds himself, of his own free will, by a solemn oath on the Evangelists.†

The picture was completed in 1310, after three years' labour, and at an expense of three thousand gold florins,‡ and was carried, on the 8th of June, from the artist's residence, outside the Porta Laterina, to the Duomo, in solemn procession, the priests chanting, leading the way, the 'Signori Nove' and

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* Quoted in the 'L. Sanesi,' tom. ii, pp. 66, 67.

† The contract is printed at length in the 'L. Sanesi,' tom. ii, p. 75. Duccio engages, "pingere et facere dictam tabulam quam melius poterit et sciverit, et Dominus sibi largietur, et laborare continue in dictam tabulam temporibus quibus laborare poterit in eâdem. Et non accipere vel recipere aliquid aliud laborerium ad faciendum donec dicta tabula completa et facta fuerit. . . . Insuper dictus Duccius ad majorem cautelam juravit sponte ad Sancta Dei Evangelia corporalia tacto libro predicta omnia et singula observare et adimplere bonâ fide sine fraude in omnibus et per omnia, sicut superius continetur."

‡ See the old chroniclers quoted by Dellavalle, *L. Sanesi*, tom. ii, pp. 68, 69.

officers of state, with the men, women, and children of Siena, fasting and with lighted candles, following in due rank and gradation,—the shops closed, and every bell of the city ringing merrily out "in honour of so noble a picture," till, after making the circuit of the Piazza del Campo, they ascended to the Duomo and proceeding to the high altar, installed it in the place left vacant by the removal of the Madonna delle Grazie, to which the city had been granted on the occasion so frequently alluded to, before the battle of Monte-Aperto. "The rest of the day," says the old chronicler who describes the scene, "was spent in prayers and almsgiving to the poor, beseeching God, and his mother, our Advocate, to defend us from adversity and evil, and preserve us from the hands of all traitors and enemies to Siena."*

This altar-piece must have been beautiful indeed, judging from the fragments that remain of it. Its appearance was that of a grand Gothic architectural façade, divided into one large and innumerable small compartments, surmounted by pyramids and minarets, the whole covered on both sides with painting, its isolated position between the nave and the choir requiring this. It retained its position till the year 1472, when it was removed to make way for the bronze tabernacle by Vecchietta; it was then thrust into a small closet in the third story of the Opera, and, as if that degradation were not sufficient, cut to

* From an ancient chronicle, of the fourteenth century, in the Library of the University of Siena, *Lett. Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 67.

pieces to facilitate its admission. It lay there for many years in utter neglect, and when it at last re-emerged, shorn of its Gothic glories, a mutilated trunk, it was sawn asunder, and the two halves hung up, facing each other, like the dissevered limbs of a martyr, in the northern and southern transepts of the Duomo,* where we now behold and groan over their fate,—for, in spite of dirt and injury, a more interesting monument of early art nowhere exists.

The Madonna, and the Saints that support her canopy, in what has been the principal face of the picture, are very noble; the type of her face is Byzantine; many of the other heads are the same as in the great fresco of the Sala del Consiglio, and the same peculiar line at right angles with the mouth may be noticed in both,—one might have thought it an early work of Simon di Memmo.† But the smaller subjects on the reverse are far more remarkable, and so different, moreover, in style, that it is difficult to suppose them by the same artist. They are twenty-six in number, the largest, the Crucifixion, occupying the upper half of the centre. Niccola Pisano's influence is everywhere visible, but as inspiration merely,—his faults are avoided.

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* *Lettere Sanesi*, tom. ii, pp. 70, 71.—It was probably during its eclipse in the Opera, forgotten and uncared for, that Vasari sought for, but could not find it.

† Duccio's name appears in the rhyming inscription as given by Von Rumohr, and which probably should be read as follows,—

"Mater Sancta Dei, sis causa Senis requiei,
Sis Ducio vita, te quia pinxit ita!"

—substituting 'causa' for 'gavisa.'

The compositions are often excellent, abounding in incident and in figures, most judiciously disposed and without confusion, the expression just and varied, the drapery admirable, the perspective in the background remarkable for the period, the colouring tending to the dark style of the Byzantines rather than the lighter tints of Mino—the whole singularly free from stiffness and angularity. I would especially notice the Deposition from the Cross,—the old traditional composition, inherited from the Byzantines, and reiterated with more or less variation by innumerable painters from Giotto to Rubens, but by none, I think, with such pathos and deep feeling as Duccio. Other subjects might be mentioned of equal merit, but there is study there for a long summer's day, and the whole series ought to be accurately traced from the originals and engraved in outline; till this has been done, the admirers of Duccio must submit patiently to the charge of exaggerating his merit, for the picture is now so dingy and dirty that ninety-nine out of a hundred visitors pass it by unnoticed.*

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* The compositions are as follows:—

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1. Our Saviour's triumphal entry into Jerusalem; 2. The

Excepting these, and a few fragments supposed to have belonged originally to the same picture, no other works remain of Duccio, although his name is mentioned in the books of the Duomo as late as 1339.* He was certainly dead in 1342.† Tradition attributes to him the invention of the *nielli*, or inlaid designs of the pavement of the Duomo,—the original idea may very probably be his, but the compositions now attributed to him are evidently of later execution.

Such are the remains of Duccio—a painter self-formed, independently of Giotto and of every artist, apparently, except Niccola Pisano, and who may challenge comparison with either of those masters on

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Last Supper; 3. Our Saviour washing the Apostles' feet; 4. Our Saviour's last discourse to the Apostles; 5. Judas receiving the thirty pieces of silver; 6. The Agony in the Garden; 7. Judas' kiss; 8. Peter denying Our Saviour; 9 to 15 inclusive, Our Saviour's different examinations before the High Priest, the Sanhedrim and Pilate; 16. Our Saviour mocked by the soldiers; 17. The Flagellation; 18. Pilate delivering Our Saviour to be crucified; 19. Our Saviour carrying his cross; 20. The Crucifixion; 21. The Deposition from the Cross; 22. The Burial of Our Saviour; 23. The Descent into Hell or Limbo; 24. The Maries at the Sepulchre; 25. The 'Noli me tangere;' 26. The pilgrimage to Emmaus.—The first of these compositions, the Entry into Jerusalem, has been elaborately described by Dr. Kügler in his Handbook, p. 38. Both this and No. 3 resemble the similar compositions attributed to Capanna, in the Lower church of Assisi. See *supra*, tom. ii, p. 288.

* *Lettere Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 69.—Vasari says he painted very many pictures, "moltissime cose," at Pisa, Lucca and Pistoja.

† From the mention of 'Galgano del già Maestro Duccio pittore" in the 'libri delle gabelle,' that year. *Lett. Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 69.

the score of richness of fancy, taste in composition, truth and variety of expression, and general mechanical execution. I can scarcely praise him too highly,—to estimate his merit and progress correctly, we should recollect that in 1308, when the altar-piece of the Duomo was begun, Giotto had only just completed the chapel of the Arena at Padua.

The old chroniclers speak in the highest general terms of Duccio's scholars,* but they specify none of them, and of the very few otherwise ascertainable as such,† none attained celebrity. I have little or no hesitation, however, in placing him at the head of that distinct line of succession in the Sienese school, characterised by a preference and general tendency to the darker colouring and the peculiar religious feeling of the Byzantines, which, mingling occasionally with that of Mino—like two fair streams flowing from the same distant source—and sometimes even lost to view during the revolutions of popular favour, still never fails ultimately to reappear, and maintains for the most part a distinct and parallel channel with it during the whole course of the fourteenth and the

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* "E li discepoli del sopradetto M. Duccio furono ancora solenni maestri di dipegnare." *Croniche Sanesi* of Buondone and Bisdomini, *Lett. Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 68.—"Duccius..inter ejusdem opificii artefices eâ tempestate primarius,..ex cujus officinâ, veluti ex equo Trojano, pictores egregii prodierunt,"—and elsewhere:—"Duccii autem pictoris discipuli in pictores optimos evasere." *Tizio's History, Ibid.*

† E. g. "Galgano del già Maestro Duccio," and "Ambrogio di Duccio di Boninsegna. *Lett. Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 66.—Nor is it clear that these were painters.

greater part of the fifteenth century. We will transfer our canoe alternately from one to the other till the streams unite and discharge themselves into the gulf of the Cinquecento.

SECTION 2.—*Simon di Memmo, or of Siena.*

THE period we are now dwelling upon was the golden age of Siena; "in the year 1317," especially, says an ancient chronicle, "the Sienese and their city enjoyed great peace and tranquillity; every one minded his own business, and all loved each other as brethren." * It was an epoch of unchecked prosperity and unbounded activity, public and private. Thirty-nine gates gave ingress and egress to a population of seventy thousand citizens;† students flocked to the university from every quarter of Italy; commerce and riches increased daily; the religious and patriotic impulse given to the national spirit by the events of 1267 was still in full vigour, and imprinted its peculiar character alike on politics, literature, and art,—and this lasted for thirty years afterwards, till the fatal plague of 1348. During this propitious period, Simon of Siena and the brothers Pietro and Ambrogio di Lorenzo represented the two great branches of the Sienese school; we will make acquaintance with Simon first, as having risen earlier to celebrity.

This illustrious artist, the rival of Giotto in the

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* Chronicle of Buondone and Bisdomini, *L. Sanesi*, tom. i, p. 188.

† In 1301, on the authority of Tizio, *Ibid.* tom. ii, p. 37.

esteem of their contemporaries, the friend of Petrarch, in whose musical verse his fame will survive after every vestige of his works has perished, was born at Siena about 1285,* of one Martino, whose name appended to his own forms his earliest appellation; in later years, subsequently to his marriage,† he occasionally adopted that of his father-in-law, Memmo or Guglielmo, forming the compound, Simon di Memmo, by which he is more generally known.

It is not clear whether he studied immediately under Mino, but the close resemblance of style would lead one to suppose so. His first important work seems to have been the restoration, in 1315,‡ of the vast fresco painted by that master in 1287. It had been blackened and scorched by the smoke of the fire maintained in the hall for the comfort of the Podestà and the Signori, who were in the habit of dining there; Simon restored the Virgin and child, and repainted the rest of the composition with such success, and so much to the satisfaction of the citizens, that a decree was solemnly passed at their requisition, forbidding either the actual or any future

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* Admitting the correctness of the epitaph reported by Vasari, which makes him sixty years old at the time of his death. Mancini however asserts that he was born in 1270, which would make him seventy-four in 1344. *Masselli's notes to Vasari.*

† To Giovanna di Memmo di Filippuccio, to whom he was wedded either in or before 1323. *Lett. Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 82.—Memmo is the diminutive of Guglielmo.

‡ This date and the name 'Symone' appear in the remains of the inscription below the fresco.

Podestà to light fires there under a severe pecuniary penalty, lest a painting (as they describe it) so "delectable to the eye, so rejoicing to the heart, and so grateful to each particular sense of humanity," should again perish.* It is to Simon therefore that we owe those heads of Apostles and Saints, male and female, so marked and characteristic, and yet so calm and beautiful, that they almost realise our idea of the confessors and martyrs of primitive Christianity.†

Nothing, in short, can be grander in conception or bolder in execution than this fresco; it is as noble, as varied as anything of Giotto's, and were every other work of Simon's lost, his share in it would fairly vindicate his reputation of an excellence second only to that of his great Florentine contemporary.

The altar-piece of the chapel of the Palazzo Pubblico, a picture in many compartments, long since broken up, but of which some fragments are preserved in the interesting gallery of the Academy, was Simon's next important work; with the exception of the head of Our Saviour, which is extremely

* The decree, reciting and granting the petition, is printed at length in Dr. Gaye's 'Carteggio degl' Artisti,' tom. ii, p. 430.—Payments occur in the records to Simon, of eight lire, "per il resto delle pitture che fece nella Casa de' Signori Nove," in 1319, *L. Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 88,—and of twenty-seven lire to 'Maestro Simone di Martino,' and his scholars, "per acconciatura [della] Maestà," on the 30th Dec. 1321. *Von Rumohr, Ital. Forsch.* tom. ii, p. 119.

† I would notice too the beautiful head of Christ, in the central medallion of the fresco frame, attended to the right and left by Moses and David, &c.

beautiful, the types are hardly worthy of him, but the different subjects are painted with great delicacy and softness. The colouring is very peculiar, yellowish, with a tendency to crimson, and an undertint of light green—totally distinct from the deeper tints of Duccio and the brothers Pietro and Ambrogio. This picture appears to have been painted about 1321.*

Next in the series of his existing works may be ranked the vast fresco, in chiaro-scuro, in the Sala del Consiglio, facing the Maestà, a world of wall, filled, and nobly filled, by the solitary figure of Guido Riccio da Fogliano, General of the Sienese in the war with Castruccio Castracani, and the captor of the fortress of Montemassi in 1328.† He is represented on horseback, riding along in triumph, richly dressed and with his baton of command; Siena and Montemassi, with the various machines employed in the siege, are represented at the opposite extremities of the composition. It is a very spirit-stirring me-

* On the *verso* of the leaf on which the payment is recorded for the "acconciatura" of the Maestà, is a similar notice of the disbursement to Simon of twenty gold florins "per suo salario del Crocefisso cheffa all' altare de la capella de' Nove," (of the nine Priori,) "e per suoi lavoratori." *Von Rumohr, Ital. Forsch.* tom. ii, p. 119.—The altar-piece was probably painted nearly at the same time. It retained its position till displaced by that of Razzi, or Sodoma. For a minute description of its fragments, as collected by Dr. Ernest Förster, see his 'Beiträge,' &c. p. 66.

† See the chronicle of Andrea Dei and Angelo Tura, *ap. Muratori, Scriptores Rer. Ital. &c.*, tom. xv, col. 83; and that of Giovanni Villani, lib. x, cap. 99.—The fresco was painted the same year, according to records in the Biccherna, *Ferri's Guida di Siena*, p. 101.

morial, worthy alike of the painter and the hero, and the earliest equestrian portrait, I believe, in Italian art. The horse, as almost invariably is the case among the early painters, moves both legs on the same side.

Three years afterwards, in 1332,* Simon visited Florence,† and painted the Chapter-house of the Santo Spirito in fresco; one of the compartments, the Crucifixion, is praised by Vasari in the highest terms, and evidently from his description bore a close resemblance to the compositions representing the same subject by Buffalmacco at Pisa and Cavallini at Assisi, and in the figures of the angels, to the works of Orcagna.

The following year, 1333, he executed, in company with his brother-in-law, Lippo di Memmo, the Annunciation, originally in the Cathedral at Siena, but now in the Gallery of the Uffizi at Florence, a very pleasing picture, although the attitude of the principal figure is so awkward and constrained that there can be little doubt of the greater part of it being by Lippo.‡ The face is full of sweetness

* He painted during the interval in the Palazzo Pubblico, in 1329—and on the façade of the hospital della Scala in 1330 or 1331—works now destroyed, and respecting which I shall speak in the following section, when treating of Pietro and Ambrogio di Lorenzo.

† So says Romagnoli in his MS. collections, but without assigning his authority. *Rosini*, tom. ii, p. 118.

‡ Dellavalle thinks the S. Massima and the angel were painted by Simon, the Madonna and S. Ansano by Lippo. *Lett. Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 111. The inscription is, "Simon Martini et Lippus Memmi de Senis me pinxerunt, anno Domini MCCCXXXIII."

and humility, but very Greek, the colouring singularly soft and soothing, and the whole picture is as fresh as if finished yesterday, a peculiarity common to most painters of the Semi-Byzantine schools, who seem to have used their colours purer or mixed them differently from their contemporaries.* Lippo, singularly enough, was an elder artist than Simon, figuring as a Maestro as early as 1308,† while it is not certain that Simon had obtained that rank even in 1315. A fresco Madonna, or Maestà, painted by Lippo in 1317 in the Sala del Consiglio at S. Gimignano,‡ one of the most interesting little towns in Tuscany, strongly resembles the great one by Mino,

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* The following is the twelfth among the fundamental Statutes of the Company of Sienese painters:—"*Di non mettere uno oro per altro, o uno colore per altro.*—Ancho ordiniamo che nullo dell' arte de' Dipintori ardisca ovver presuma di mettere ne' lavorii che facesse altro oro, o ariento [argento], o colore che avesse promesso, si come oro di metà per oro fino, e stagno per ariento, azzurro de la Magna [d'Alemagna] per azzurro oltramarino, biadetto overo Indico per azzurro, terra rossa o minio per cinabro, e chi contrafacesse per le predette cose sia punito e condannato per ogni volta in x libra."—*Statutes, &c., in Gaye's Carteggio*, tom. ii, p. 7.

† Payment, 29th October that year, to "Maestro Filippo pittore,..per la pittura delle Torre," in the books of the Biccherna, *L. Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 110.

‡ Signed and dated that year, and the best of his works that I have seen. Some of the heads are very fine. The composition (as observed before) is nearly the same as in the Maestà of Mino. 'Messer Nello di Messer Mino de Talommei [Tolomei] di Siena, onorevole Podestà e Chapitano del chomune del populo della terra di San Gimignano,' is seen kneeling among the Saints. It was restored by Benozzo Gozzoli in 1467. A Madonna suckling Our Saviour, in S. Agostino, attributed to Simon by Vasari, is doubtless by Lippo.

both in composition and in the individual figures. Possibly therefore he may have been Simon's first instructor, and that relationship may have led to the closer family alliance. Be this as it may, Lippo is believed to have attached himself exclusively to Simon after it took place, to have worked in company with him during the remaining years of Simon's life, and to have imitated his manner during the many he survived him.*

Hitherto we have traced our artist's career step by step with calm security, reposing on the evidence of inscriptions and original documents existing at Siena; but this guidance fails us when he quits his country, and much uncertainty prevails as to his movements and employment during the last ten or twelve years of his life. Vasari, who tells us that he studied under Giotto while occupied on the Navicella di S. Pietro, adds that he revisited Rome after "his master's death," and imitating his manner, was invited to Avignon in consequence; but the first of these assertions involves an extreme improbability, Simon having been only thirteen years old in 1298, and the latter rests on Vasari's sole authority. The truth is, that Simon's visit to Avignon, (which there is reason to believe took place in 1336, the year before Giotto's death,)† his intimacy with Pe-

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* *Vasari.*

† According to Tizio, he had begun painting a Madonna and Saints in the Piazza Paperoni at Siena, but left the work imperfect, "a Cardinali transeunte in Franciam secum perductus." This Cardinal is presumed to have been the legate, proved by the

trarch, his having painted Laura's portrait, his receipt at Siena of twenty gold florins, apparently part of an annuity from the state, in the early half of 1344,* and his death before the fourth of August that year, "in curiâ," at the papal court, either of Avignon or Rome,† are the sole facts we can depend upon as proved by authentic evidence. Everything else is subject to dispute, and food, alas! for criticism.

Three great works, however, all in fresco—the first three compartments of the life of S. Ranier in the Campo Santo at Pisa—three walls (at least) of the Capitolo, or Chapter-house of S. Maria Novella at Florence—and the chapel of S. Martin in the Lower church of S. Francis at Assisi, have for centuries been ascribed to Simon's pencil as productions of this later period; the tradition has only recently been impugned, and difficulties alike attend its admission and rejection. These three series are most interesting in themselves, and if not by Simon, are unquestionably by the succession of Mino, of which he was the representative; while in the two last,

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records of the Biccherna to have passed through Siena in 1336. *Lett. Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 83.—Giotto died on the 8th January, 1336–7.

* "M. Simone Martini dipintore ha avuto venti fiorini d' oro, i quali de avere in vita sua come apare iscritto a sua ragione." Cited by Dellavalle from the books of the Spedale, or great Hospital, *Lett. Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 90.

† "Magister Simon Martini pictor mortuus est in curiâ, cujus exequias fecimus in conventum die 4. mensis Augusti, 1344." *Necrology of the convent of S. Domenico*, cited by *Baldinucci*, tom. ii, p. 10.

especially, a Giottesque influence is perceptible, mingling with, though not superseding, that of Siena. We will examine them therefore, *seriatim*, with the attention they deserve, merely premising a few remarks on the position that Simon occupied at the point of time we are now pausing upon, to wit, the year 1333,—remarks which may perhaps assist us hereafter in forming a correcter judgment on the evidence, internal and external, as to their authorship.

In the first place, then, reviewing the works we have already noticed, it is clear that they are characterised by the feeling and expression of the Contemplative rather than the Dramatic element; we are conscious as yet of no Florentine influence; they are purely Sienese, both in feeling and manner; setting aside the affinity that necessarily must subsist between painters inspired by the same central principle of art, there is nothing to indicate a deference on the part of Simon to Giotto, nothing to countenance the assertion of Vasari and others that he became his pupil. This supposition therefore, in the broad sense, we reject:—

On the other hand, it is impossible to deny that a transition to the Dramatic taste would involve a modification of manner, and that the imitation even of Duccio would, in this point of view, be an approximation to Giotto:—

While, thirdly, it is at the same time evident that the restorer of the great fresco of the Sala del Consiglio had powers far beyond the inactive field to which he there, and in his easel-paintings, confines

himself; and that his quitting that field for one more in sympathy with the tastes of his new employers could alone have acquired him the reputation which he enjoyed at Florence.

It is very possible, therefore, that Simon, finding a demand for dramatic painting in the foreign states which he visited after leaving Siena, and feeling powers in himself enabling him to meet that demand, may have adapted those powers to the ends required, and have even adopted, although with the independence of original genius, those peculiarities of manner which he found prerequisite to ensure the fair appreciation of critics, whose taste had been previously and exclusively formed on Giotto as their model.—It is very possible, therefore—to apply the argument to the frescoes we are about to examine—that they may be by Simon, and that, so far as general external resemblance or imitation may be considered pupilage, he may have merited the epithet of Giottesco.—But this possibility, you will observe, by no means determines the paternity in his favour; it is an *à priori* argument only, sufficient to remove a prejudice against it, and to invest the traditional ascription, and every additional plea that may be discovered in support of it, with increased value, but insufficient of itself to establish the fact, should the objections that arise from internal evidence, or external history, prove too weighty in the balance.—Objections of this nature will be found, I think, to preponderate in the case of the first of the three series which I shall now describe to you.

The frescoes in the Campo Santo, depicting the early scenes in the life of S. Ranier, the patron of Pisa, are assigned to the years 1334 and 1335 by those who ascribe them to Simon.* They are three in number. In the first, we see the Saint in his days of secular vanity, accompanying with his music the dance of a company of gaily attired maidens; a devout lady, his cousin, reproves him by the example of a holy monk, Alberto Leccapecore, who passes by; he quits the spot and confesses his sins at the feet of Alberto, while the Holy Spirit descends on him like a dove,—this takes place at the porch of the church of S. Vito, within which he is seen kneeling to Our Saviour, who restores his sight, which he had lost from weeping for his sins,—his aged father and mother, to whose prayers this boon was granted, kneel on either side of him. This last group is very pleasing, and the figures of the devout lady and of the maidens, who seem to have paused in their dance in consequence of her interference, are excellent; but the greater part of the fresco has been repainted.†

The second compartment represents his voyage to the Holy Land,—a putrid stench pervaded the vessel, it was traced to a chest in which he kept his money,—the passengers are represented holding their noses and looking into it; admonished in a vision by Our Saviour, he distributed it to the poor on re-

* By Romagnoli, followed by Rosini, *Storia, &c.*, tom. ii, p. 72.

† See pp. 22, 32, 36, 40, of the 'Vita di S. Ranieri,' &c., *Pisa*, fol. 1755.

ceiving the habit of a monk in the church of Tyre, as represented in the centre of the fresco. Shortly afterwards, for his reward and encouragement, he was favoured with a vision of the glory of the Madonna. Two aged Saints, in white raiment, conducted him before her,—she said to him, "Thou shalt rest in my bosom!"—to which replying, "How so, Lady?" she answered, "Thy body shall repose in my church which is at Pisa, for ever."—This vision is represented at the extremity of the compartment,—she is seated on her throne, surrounded by virgins and angels, a crown on her head, the star on her shoulder, without the child, but with the crescent, the symbol of the woman in the Apocalypse and of Diana and Isis of the elder world, below her feet; her attitude and flowing drapery remind one strongly of Mino, while some of her attendant maidens are very graceful and lovely. But this compartment also, the best of the series, has suffered much."*

The Third, and the best preserved, represents the miracles of S. Ranier in the Holy Land, his temptations by the devil, who torments him at his prayers, carries him up into the air, but without being able to throw him down, and pelts him with stones, but without being able to hit him,—his encounter with two panthers,† which, instead of devouring, crouch humbly at his feet; his vision, while journeying to Mount Tabor, of Our Saviour transfigured between Moses and Elias; his return to the convent of the

* See the Vita, pp. 50, 55.

† "Duas Yenas, quas vulgus vocat Lonzas." *Ibid.* p. 103.

Holy Sepulchre, and his multiplication of a loaf when bread was needed for the poor,*—events followed by his return to Pisa, the circumstances of which, and of his subsequent adventures, as depicted in the three concluding compartments by Antonio Veneziano, I have already noticed.†

Grace and expression in the individual figures form the distinguishing merit of these frescoes, balanced by inferiority in design, as compared with the works of the Giotteschi, and a want of distinctness in the composition, and of proportion between the architecture and the groups that people it; the latter are by no means well discriminated, the figures are crowded together, the same personage is repeatedly introduced, and in too close proximity, as in the bas-reliefs of Niccola Pisano at Bologna; these faults are infinitely less remarkable in the frescoes of S. Maria Novella and Assisi, and would prove the latter of much later execution, were their ascription to the same artist to be depended upon. But I think there can be little doubt that the authorship is different. Were it clear, as it is not, that the history of S. Ranier was painted in 1334-5, we might have imputed the worst parts to an assistant hand, and accounted for the comparative inferiority of the best

* *Vita*, pp. 82, 103, 106, 109.

† *Supra*, tom. ii, p. 294. These compositions have been engraved by Lasinio in the great work on the Campo Santo, 1812.—The fresco of the Assumption in the Campo Santo, said by Vasari to have been Simon's first work there, appears to be by a painter distinct from the author of the life of S. Rainier. The angels, though stiff, are very pleasing.

by the supposition that Simon had not as yet acquired facility in his new dramatic career. Even on this theory, the lapse of above half a century between their commencement and conclusion would be rather startling. But a peculiar circumstance renders this lapse of years absolutely incredible. In 1356, a pestilence which was making great ravages at Pisa suddenly ceased in consequence, as it was supposed, of the intercession of S. Ranier;* an enthusiastic veneration for him immediately arose, — had the frescoes delineating his history then existed in a state of imperfection, this access of devotion would indubitably have insured their completion. But as that, unquestionably, was not effected till 1386,† when Antonio Veneziano was employed for the purpose, the conjecture almost arises to certainty that they were first commenced in 1356,—a magnificent *ex voto*, as they have been well described, in gratitude for national deliverance.‡ On the other hand, if this be so, they cannot be by Simon of Siena, who died in 1344; and we may attribute them therefore either to his brother-in-law, Lippo, who was still living in 1361,§ or to some contemporary painter

* *Rio, De la Poésie Chrétienne*, p. 54.

† *Vide supra*, vol. ii, p. 295.

‡ *Rio, De la Poésie Chrétienne*, p. 54.

§ Unless indeed the Lippo who was paid that year, conjointly with Giovanni di Benedetto, but with his name postponed to his, for painting the spaces between the windows in the Sala del Consiglio, was a different artist. Vasari says that Lippo di Memmo survived his brother-in-law Simon twelve years. (a)

(a) The name of one of his pupils, Giovanni de M. Lippo, occurs in a roll of the Company of Sienese painters, *Lett. Sanesi*, tom. i, p. 159.

of the succession of their common patriarch, Mino. I relinquish them, accordingly, though with some reluctance, to the requisitions of criticism.

But the arguments alleged in disproof of Simon's claim to the two remaining series, although not without their weight, are much less cogent.

The Chapter-house of S. Maria Novella—otherwise styled from its transfer to that nation in the sixteenth century, the Cappella degli Spagnuoli—was built * by Bonamico Guidalotti, a citizen of Florence, rich, devout, and childless, for the purpose of celebrating the annual festival of the Holy Sacrament or Corpus Christi.† One Dominican monk, Fra Jacopo da Nipozzano, furnished the architectural design, and another, Fra Jacopo Passavanti, is said to have selected the subjects for internal decoration.‡ They are chosen with a depth of thought, a propriety and taste, to which those of the Camera della Segnatura, painted by Raphael in the Vatican, afford the only parallel example. Each composition is perfect in itself, yet each derives significance from juxta-position with its neighbour, and one idea pervades the whole, the Unity of the Body of Christ, the Church, and the glory of the order of S. Domenic

* About 1320, according to Mecatti's 'Notizie, &c. risguardanti il Capitolo..di S. Maria Novello," *Flor.* 4to. 1737.—But if so soon, how came it, as we shall find hereafter, that the internal decoration was still incomplete in 1355?

† Instituted in 1264 by Urban IV.

‡ *Mecatti, Notizie, &c.*, p. 10.

as the defenders and preservers of that Unity. This chapel, therefore, is to the Dominicans what the church of Assisi is to the Franciscans, the graphic mirror of their spirit, the apotheosis of their fame.

The architecture is perfectly simple; the roof is groined, supported by two intersecting pointed arches. The spaces between the ribs and the four walls beneath them are covered with frescoes, the series, in its march of thought, commencing on the altar-wall, ascending to the space above it, and then circulating round the chapel, the subject depicted within each of the remaining compartments of the roof symbolising the more extended composition that expands on the wall below it. Of these, the four on the roof and the whole left-hand wall are ascribed to Taddeo Gaddi, the remainder to Simon,—I noticed in a previous page the circumstances, so honourable to the former artist, which are said to have occasioned the partition of the work between them.*

These compositions demand, and will reward, a minute examination. We begin with the

Eastern or Altar-Wall, and the Compartment of the roof above it.

The whole of this wall, with the exception of the space occupied by the altar and tribune, is covered by one grand composition, in which, rejecting the usual division into compartments, Simon has repre-

* *Vide supra*, tom. ii, p. 272.

sented in a continuous field the three scenes of the Procession to Calvary, the Crucifixion, and the Descent into Hades. Commencing at the lowest extremity to the left of the tribune, the Procession—Our Saviour in the midst, preceded by the soldiery on horseback, and followed by the Virgin, Mary Magdalen, and the women from Galilee—winds along under the walls of Jerusalem, crowded with spectators, and ascends the hill of Calvary, on the summit of which, in the centre of the wall, directly above the altar, the Mediator is again represented expiring on the tree, with the malefactors to the right and left; angels carry away the soul of the penitent thief, devils that of the obdurate one; Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, and other of the believing Jews are grouped round the cross, and among them Longinus the centurion, on his horse, praying. In the right corner, the soldiers part the garments of the Saviour; to the left, nearly opposite the cross of the penitent thief, stand the Maries, weeping, a lovely company, full of grace and dignity; deep sorrow speaks in every look and attitude, yet stops short of caricature; this group is inexpressibly reposeful in the midst of the crowded scene. The horses especially are extremely well done for the time, and may be compared to those of Buffalmacco, Cavallini, Orcagna and Spinello. I have already observed that the Semi-Byzantine and Contemplative succession, the Ghibelline heirs of the Lombards, seem to have felt especial sympathy with those noble animals—a sympathy fully inherited in the fifteenth

century by Donatello.—This composition is really marvellous — as extensive and daring as any of Giotto's, and not inferior to him in the beauty of the individual figures. It evidently bears the closest resemblance to the fresco of the same subject in the Chapter-house of the Santo Spirito, as described by Vasari.

Finally, low down to the right of the altar, the Redeemer despoils Hades, triumphing over Death and Satan; he stands on the broken door, underneath which Satan lies crushed, while the routed devilry gaze in a terrified group from the opposite side of the chasm which divides Limbo from their own peculiar region. Our Saviour, full of sweetness and tranquil majesty, takes Adam by the hand to lead him out; Abel follows, bearing the lamb,—and behind these, the Saints of the Old Testament press forward with rapture,—Abraham, Joshua, David, Rebecca, Rachel, &c. Some of the female faces are very lovely.

The process of redemption rises to its climax in the compartment of the roof, where the Resurrection is represented by Taddeo Gaddi. The Saviour rises in white raiment, holding the banner of the cross in his right hand and an olive-branch in his left, the pledge of peace; two angels sit in august tranquillity on the edge of the tomb; to the left, the three Maries, graceful figures, approach with their spices; to the right, the Saviour appears to Mary Magdalen in the garden; in the extreme angle on this side, a cave is represented, that (I presume) of

Our Lord's sepulture, with a sarcophagus, out of which a jet of water falls down through a fissure in the rock, probably intended for the fount of the Gospel, and a peacock, emblematical of the resurrection, standing beside the cave.—At the opposite extremity to the left, behind the Maries, is seen a city, intended primarily perhaps for the earthly, and symbolically for the heavenly Jerusalem, and in the furthest corner two figures in a thicket of fruit-trees, eating the fruit, figurative of Paradise.—These details, as well as the composition as a whole, bear a strong resemblance to the Byzantine mosaics, and this is the case with all the frescoes in this chapel by Taddeo Gaddi. They have great merit, although his design is much harder and his colouring much redder than that of Simon.

The frescoes of the

Western or Entrance-Wall,
and of the Compartment that overhangs it,

begin with the Ascension, also by Taddeo Gaddi, and the usual composition; below this are six compartments in two rows, by Simon, one row above, and the other intervening between the windows, the door of entrance and the side-walls of the chapel. In the first, to the left of the upper row, the 'Angelic Doctor,' S. Thomas Aquinas, receives the habit of S. Domenic in a solemn chapter of the order; in the second, to the right, he is represented lecturing from a pulpit, probably at Paris. The compartments below these have been much injured by the wet ad-

mitted by the windows above them; the first of them represents the death of S. Peter Martyr, Inquisitor General, murdered between Como and Milan in 1252, by the Cathari or Puritans of Lombardy, and here represented, according to the legend, writing the creed with his finger on the ground, as he expired, —it has not much merit, but of the remaining three, commemorating cures wrought by Saints of the Dominican order, the last but one is especially beautiful; it represents the restoration to life of a dead child; the whole family group are gathered round him; he springs from the lap of his sister to his mother's neck in joyful recognition; between them, a little behind, appears the grandmother, in deep grief; the father kneels in the background in anxious prayer—neither are as yet aware of the miracle; two monks to the right, beholding it, express in their various attitudes astonishment and thankfulness. And the execution is little less admirable than the composition.

Contiguous to these, on the

Northern or Left-hand Wall,
and the corresponding Compartment on the roof,

appear the Descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles, (comprehending the Succession which derives from them, and in which, according to the Catholic dogma, it abides "till the end of the world,") and the Triumph or Glorification of S. Thomas Aquinas, the mouth-piece of that Spirit—champion of the Holy Roman faith against the Cathari and the Albigenses, the Jews and the Saracenic free-

thinkers of Spain—the reducer of all human science into one grand system of divinity—the author, in a word, of the 'Summa Theologiæ,' and of the office in use to this day for the celebration of the festival of Corpus Christi, to which, as mentioned above, this chapel was dedicated.

The former of these compositions, on the ceiling, resembles the oldest Byzantine mosaics rather than the more recent traditionary composition; the Virgin and Apostles are seen standing within a large building closed by folding doors, while various figures in Eastern dresses, outside, are trying to open them.—Beneath this, on a lofty throne, elevated above a carved Gothic screen, divided into fourteen stalls, S. Thomas sits in state, displaying an open book on which are inscribed the words, "Optavi, et datus est mihi sensus, et invocavi et venit in me Spiritus Sapientiæ, et præposui illam regnis et sedibus," from the Book of Wisdom.* The heretics Arius, Sabellius, and Averrhoes lie at his feet. He is attended to the right and left by Saints of the Old and New Testament,—on the one side by Solomon, Isaiah, Moses, S. Luke, S. Matthew; by Job, David, S. Paul, S. Mark, and S. John the Evangelist on the other. The four Cardinal and the three Theological Virtues float gracefully above him, beautiful figures, each recognisable by her appropriate emblem; the sky was once of ultramarine, long since picked off by sacri-

* "Wherefore I prayed and understanding was given me: I called upon God, and the Spirit of Wisdom came to me. I preferred her before sceptres and thrones." Chap. vii, 7, 8.

lege, and below, in the fourteen stalls, the seven Profane and the seven Theological Sciences are seated in the shape of beautiful maidens, each with her most distinguished votary attendant at her feet —the genius of S. Thomas towering, inspiring, and interpreting them all. It is a very noble idea, and these maiden Sciences are worthy of comparison with the Virtues and Vices of the Arena at Padua; they are far more graceful and not less admirably discriminated. The seven Profane Sciences, comprehending the Trivium and Quadrivium of the middle ages, commence at the right hand,—the seven Theological at the left, and the two thus meet in the centre, below S. Thomas. I will briefly enumerate them,—beginning with the former series:—

I. Grammar,—holding a cane in one hand, and an orange in the other, and instructing two children. —Below her, Priscian, the grammarian, writing his treatise, the text-book of education during the middle ages.

II. Rhetoric, or Eloquence—haranguing, her left hand resting on her side, her right holding a scroll, on which is written

> "Eluceo dum loquor,
> Varios induta colores."

—Below her, Cicero, from whose mantle a third hand issues, which has never yet been satisfactorily accounted for.

III. Logic—holding a branch in her right hand and in her left a scorpion.—Below her, Aristotle, with his essay.

IV. Music—playing on the organ.—Below her, Tubalcain, a rough shaggy blacksmith, hammering on his anvil.

V. Astronomy — holding the celestial sphere, crowned and pointing upwards, as if inspired.—Below her, Zoroaster, crowned, gazing upwards, and writing his observations.

VI. Geometry—a beautiful figure, the face lovely, holding the quadrant.—Below her, Euclid, with his 'Elements.'

VII. Arithmetic—holding the abacus, and calculating.—Below her, Pythagoras, also calculating—placed here, doubtless, in consideration of his grand philosophy of numbers.

Of still superior merit are the seven Theological Sciences:—

I. Civil Law—as involving the idea of the Holy Roman Empire—holding the sword horizontally, and the globe, and crowned.—Below her, the Emperor Justinian, in profile, with his sceptre and his Institutes.

II. Canon Law—holding the model of a church.—Below her, the Pope, blessing with his right hand and holding the key in his left, with a book lying flat in his lap.*

"III. Practical Theology—holding a small picture or medallion, in which Our Saviour is represented, preaching, beside (apparently) the Sea of Galilee.—At her feet, Peter Lombard, the Master of the Sen-

* It is said by Vasari to represent Clement V., who reigned from 1305 to 1314.

tences, resting his hand on the work from which he derives his name.

IV. Speculative Theology — holding a style or ward in her left hand, the right raised and half opened, as if enrapt by the glory of her thoughts.—Below her, Dionysius Areopagita, in deep meditation, his fingers pressed round his mouth. Both figures singularly dramatic and expressive.

V. Demonstrative Theology—crowned, the right hand pointing upwards, the left holding a fan for winnowing corn, as emblematical of truth.—Below her, Boethius, writing his 'Consolations of Philosophy,' an admirable figure, full of ardour; he looks up for a moment from the page, holding up the pen and saying, "See now, how I will prove the point!"

VI. Contemplative or Mystic Theology—that more especially of the Franciscans and of S. Bonaventura—both hands raised and gazing up in ecstasy.—Below her, S. John Damascenus, (rather a bathos!) mending his pen, with a book on his knee, probably his spiritual romance of 'Barlaam and Josaphat,' then universally popular.

VII. Polemic or Scholastic Theology—that more especially of the Dominicans and of S. Thomas Aquinas — wearing a helmet surmounted by the cross—an unstrung bow in her left hand and an arrow in her right; she looks you full in the face, ready for the war.—Below her, S. Augustine, holding a volume of his writings open, with a quiet look of "What have you to reply to this?"—Both figures most graphic.

The whole of this fresco is attributed by Vasari to Taddeo Gaddi, and very possibly the upper part of it, including the Cardinal and Theological Virtues, may be by him; but I cannot help considering the lower as by Simon di Memmo, or at least by the Sienese artist who painted the remaining walls. The draperies, the female forms, the type of countenance, the colouring, and what strikes me still more forcibly, the spirit and feeling, appear to me essentially the same.*

On this side, therefore, of the chapel we have the Theory of Truth, Divine and Human, as revealed by the Holy Spirit, resident in the Catholic Church, through the Angelic Doctor; it remains for us to contemplate its Practical application, the machinery appointed by Providence for its inculcation on mankind. This accordingly is represented in the frescoes, facing the preceding composition, on the

Southern or Right-hand Wall
and on the Compartment above it,

depicting the Church, the Body of Christ, inclusive both of clergy and laity, in action through the life communicated by the Spirit abiding within her—Militant on Earth and Triumphant in Heaven—her Unity on earth defended, and her individual mem-

* I should hardly have hazarded such an opinion but for the assent it received from an eminent Italian artist, practically conversant with mediæval art, whom I consulted on the question. This fresco is engraved in Rosini, tav. 13.

bers guided on the heavenward path, by the Dominicans.*

The composition on the upper compartment, the Ship of the Church, by Taddeo Gaddi, is the old traditional one, as modified by Giotto—here, however, peculiarly appropriate after S. Thomas's allusion to S. Domenic in the 'Paradiso' of Dante.† The fresco on the wall below it is, on the contrary, strikingly original, a living picture of the world of Christendom during the middle ages.

The field of the composition is filled, to the left, by a Tuscan-Gothic cathedral, copied from the model of the Duomo of Florence, as originally designed by Arnolfo,‡ and symbolising the Church Militant,—to the right, by a spacious landscape closed by the towers of a distant city, and planted with fruit-trees, into which figures are seen climbing, plucking and throwing down the fruit to their comrades — symbolising the world, the lovers of the world, the tasters of the apples of Sodom.

In front of the cathedral sit, side by side, on lofty

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* I write fearlessly, in the spirit (*pro tempore*) of the fourteenth century and of S. Domenic.

† "Pensa oramai qual fu colui che degno
Collega (a) fu a mantener la barca
Di Pietro in alto mar per dritto segno:
E questi fu il nostro Patriarca."
Par. xi, 118–121.

‡ The Campanile is placed at the South-East angle, either because Arnolfo so intended it, or for convenience in the composition of the fresco.

(a) "Collega," that is to say, with S. Francis: — Dante assigns them equal merit and dignity.

thrones, the representatives of the Ecclesiastical and the Civil Power—the Pope, in his tiara, blessing with his right hand, bearing a crosier in his left, and supported on his right hand by a Cardinal and a Bishop* —the Emperor, crowned, holding a sword in his right hand and in his left a skull,† and supported on his left hand by a Judge and a Baron or Warrior.

To the right of the Pope, at the extremity of the composition nearest to the altar-wall, sit, stand and kneel, in every attitude and occupation, the spiritual army of the Church, representatives of the monastic orders, some in prayer, some in study, some in contemplation, some disputing, some conversing—monks, nuns, knights of Rhodes—all most skilfully grouped, and delighting the eye alike in their individuality and their combination;‡ while, towards the right, appear a corresponding array of secular attendants on the Emperor, among whom the portraits of Cimabue, Petrarch, and Simon himself are pointed out by tradition.

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* The Pope is said to be the portrait of Benedict XII., elected in 1303, and dead in 1304,—and the Cardinal to represent Cardinal Alberoni da Prato, sent by him legate to Florence in order to reconcile the Guelphs and Ghibellines. *Vasari.*

† Probably to signify that his reign is over Death only, the Pope's over life—over Matter, that is to say, as contrasted with Spirit—the principle on which heretics were given over to the secular arm for punishment. The distinction thus established between the temporal and spiritual power, however abused in the first instance, was in its results one of the greatest boons of Providence to mankind.

‡ I would notice especially the young monk, kneeling on one knee, with his hand on his mouth, close to another, fat and gross, kneeling on both knees, and looking up in prayer.

Finally, between these groups, at the feet of the Pope, repose certain sheep, figurative of the faithful, and in front, ready to defend them if required, stand two dogs, symbolical of the Dominicans, 'Domini Canes,' 'Watch-dogs of the Lord,' and painted black and white, in allusion to the particoloured habit of the order. The delineation of their services is more specifically carried out in the remaining half of the lower part of the fresco. Immediately in the foreground the particoloured dogs are represented killing the wolves who have been worrying the sheep of Christ,—figurative of the Inquisitors hunting out and destroying heresy; S. Domenic, standing at the extremity of the group of seculars above noticed, directs attention to them. On the same plane, a little more to the right, another Saint of the order is represented arguing with heretics, an excellent group, full of varied expression; and near the corner to the right, a third exhibits a controversial treatise to a similar company of opponents; some of them in Oriental costumes, converts probably from Averrhoes or from Judaism, kneel to him as men eager for instruction; one, pierced by conviction, tears a leaf out of his book,—an old man in the background clasps his hands in contrition—all are admirable.

Behind these groups, and in the garden of delights above alluded to, are seated four figures, male and female, in a line,* representatives apparently of the

* The first and nearest to the cloister-wall, a man of middle age, appears to be in deep abstracted thought; the second, a lady, caresses a lap-dog; the third, an old man, crowned, carries a bird on his wrist; the fourth, a youthful figure, plays on the violin.

riches, gaiety, pride and vanity of this life—guilty of no dogmatic heresy, but indifferent to the duties of time and the prospects of eternity. Seven virgins, in two divisions of four and three each, richly dressed, and so graceful that one hardly likes to acknowledge the probability that they are intended for the seven deadly sins, dance before them to the music of the tambour and the bagpipe, played respectively by a girl to the right and a youth to the left; adjacent to this last, two youths look on, the arm of one round the other's neck,—all these figures are diminutive in proportion to the four that look on.

A path, however, steep and narrow, crosses this flowery scene and leads up to Paradise; a mother and her child have just started upon it, or rather the former seems to have drawn the latter unwillingly away. A little further on, two small figures appear among the bushes, plucking the fruit,—falling, that is to say, into sin. Higher still, repentance is rewarded by absolution; a full-sized figure is represented receiving it from a Dominican monk, who sits in the same line with the four great ones of the world, but turning his back upon them. Lastly, S. Domenic re-appears, pointing towards the gate of Paradise; S. Peter stands beside it, attended by two angels,—a crowd of souls flock towards him, kneel, are crowned by the angels, and then hurry in. Paradise is represented immediately above the roof and dome of the Cathedral, and the gate of entrance above the Western door, — elegance of effect has been sacrificed to the symbolism; within the gate is

seen the whole army of the Saints and Martyrs of the Church Triumphant, each recognisable by his emblem. At the summit of all, within a luminous circle, as in the mosaics, the Saviour sits supreme, enthroned on the rainbow, and holding the book of life in his right hand and the keys of heaven in his left—the altar, and the lamb lying on it as it had been slain, surrounded by the emblems of the four Evangelists, at his feet—and attended on either side by a glory of angels, among whom the Virgin stands at his right hand, crowned and holding her lily.*

I need not, I hope, apologize for having entered so fully into the details of these singular frescoes; were their merit as paintings of a less decided character, their historical interest might well plead my excuse.

In all of them, with the exception of the compartments of the roof attributed to Taddeo Gaddi, the peculiar character of the Sienese school is predominant; many portions, even whole groups, when duly analysed, betray, in the isolation of their component figures, a Contemplative rather than a Dramatic taste; and even in those which fall strictly under the latter character, the resemblance to Duccio will strike you, I think, as stronger than that to Giotto, —there is the same copiousness of composition, the same sculptural style of relief and grouping, the same propensity to seize the moment of repose rather than that of motion—a distinction which might be

* This fresco is engraved in Rosini, tav. 13.

more clearly recognised were it possible to bring them into closer comparison with the frescoes of the Arena. On the other hand, the colouring is softer and yellower than that of the Giotteschi, with the same greenish spring-like hue, suffused over it, that we have noticed in the undoubted works of Simon di Memmo, rendering a descent to the lower compartments inexpressibly refreshing after the eye has been parched and dried up by the adust tints of Taddeo Gaddi. Perhaps the landscape, in the fresco of the Church Militant, conduces to this impression; though rude to a degree, it exhibits a decided improvement upon that of Giotto, which is seldom or never superior to the Byzantine,—the Sienese long preceded the Florentines in their sensibility to the charms of external nature. Viewing the series as a whole, there is undoubtedly a general resemblance to the Giotteschi, but it is superficial and evanescent when we visit them fresh, not from Assisi or Padua, but from Siena.

Altogether Vasari's estimate of these frescoes, as by an artist, not of the youth but of the maturity of painting,* is fully justified.

Touching their authorship, the main ground of opposition to the claims of Simon di Memmo rests on the fact that Guidalotti, the founder of the chapel, enjoins his brother Domenico, in his will, dated

* "Non da maestro di quell' età, ma da moderno eccellentissimo." He says this, especially, of the paintings on the altar-wall.

1355, to take care that the paintings of the chapel be duly completed,—bequeathing three hundred and twenty-five florins, in addition to the sum previously expended upon them, for the remuneration of the artist,—to which, we are further informed, Domenico added ninety-two more himself.* The frescoes having been incomplete in 1355, and Simon di Memmo having died eleven years before, in 1344, it is considered improbable that he should have had anything to do with them.—This unfavourable presumption is strengthened by the silence of Ghiberti concerning them in his brief notice of Simon.—Moreover, it is added, while the design, colouring, and various peculiarities of manner are certainly Sienese—though it may be questioned whether they are those of Simon—these frescoes are remarkable for the omission of the scrolls and inscriptions common to the school, and of the peculiar style of ornamental decoration noticeable in those undoubted works of Simon, the Maestà and the fragments of the altar-piece of the chapel of the Palazzo Pubblico at Siena; while their character of Thought, as contrasted with that which he there more particularly exhibits—of Feeling, justifies this scepticism.†

On the other hand it may be pleaded—that the

* *Mecatti, Notizie, &c.*, p. 16.

† This last objection is especially dwelt upon by Förster, *Beiträge*, p. 175,—who suspends his judgment nevertheless till positive proof be adduced against Simon's claims. Förster recognises only the Maestà of the Sala del Consiglio, the fragments of the altar-piece in the Academy, and the Annunciation of 1333 at Florence, as undoubted works of Simon.

portion specified as unfinished in Guidalotti's will, may have been the tribune, of the paintings of which we know nothing except that they were destroyed in 1592, and replaced by those of Alessandro Allori,* —that the general character of the frescoes, admittedly Sienese,† is surely that of the succession of Mino in contra-distinction to that of Duccio,—that these frescoes not having been painted in a corner, but before the eyes of Florence, at the expense of a munificent patron, and for one of the most potent communities of the Christian world, Fame must have dictated the selection of the artist in the first instance, and perpetuated his reputation afterwards,—that, saving and except Simon, and the author of the chapel of S. Martin at Assisi, whom we have every reason to believe identical with him, no artist of the line of Mino enjoyed such a reputation in the fourteenth century, or has left works in the slightest degree vindicating his title to it,—that the unbroken tradition of at least three centuries, ascribing them to Simon of Siena, an alien and a foreigner, is thus entitled to more weight,—that the frescoes in the Chapter-house of the Santo Spirito, admittedly by Simon, afforded Vasari and the Florentines continual means of checking their judgment by comparison,—that the silence of Ghiberti concerning them is of less significance than if he had attributed them to

* *Mecatti, Notizie, &c.*, p. 22.

† Förster admits that the "technik" is not Florentine. *Beiträge, ibid.*—Dr. Kügler, indeed, appears to consider them purely Giottesque, *Handbook*, p. 63.

another, such absolute oversight of works so interesting being accountable only by a momentary forgetfulness, while penning a record which is evidently a first draught from memory, fragmentary and full of repetition,—that the omission of the scrolls, inscriptions, &c., as well as of other minor peculiarities, might have been in deference to the Giottesque prepossessions of Florence, or even in consequence of his own amended or altered taste,*—that whatever objections arise on this score apply with equal force to the frescoes at Assisi, while (if I may so far anticipate) the comparatively stronger weight of testimony attaching to those reflects retrospective credit upon these, — and, finally, that the transition in Simon's mind, supposing him the author of these frescoes, from Feeling to Thought, is no less visible in that of Raphael, on comparing the 'Madonna del Cardellino' with the 'School of Athens,' while the counsels of a Passavanti may be adduced in the former instance, like those of a Giovio in the latter,

* It appears however from Mecatti's 'Notizie,' that, in what he calls the "nuovo ripulimento delle pitture," the original fresco frieze was replaced by a more modern one, and possibly other alterations may have then taken place. Before that period, he says, two inscriptions existed, "in antico carattere," "in due tondi, o siano formelle centinate all' uso antico," on the Eastern and Western walls,—in the former was written, "Simonis Memmi Senensis opus, qui triplicem hunc parietem nobilissima hac pictura ingeniosissime ornavit,"—on the latter, "Taddei Gaddi Florentini opus, qui hunc parietem, una cum superiori testudine egregie depinxit." I should doubt, however, from the style of these inscriptions, their being of earlier date than the sixteenth century.

to lessen one's astonishment—even were we inclined to overlook or deny that development of Thought and of the Dramatic power which sometimes takes place in minds originally Contemplative,—a consideration which, partially at least, without laying more than its due stress on his intimacy with the Fornarina, may account for what is frequently styled the apostasy of Raphael.

Upon the whole, then, I think we may venture to believe as our fathers believed before us, and acquiesce in their ascription of these interesting frescoes to Simon di Memmo.

I proceed therefore to the history of S. Martin, in the chapel dedicated to that Saint, the first to the left of the nave, in the Lower church of S. Francis at Assisi,—a very interesting series.

The first and second compartments represent that beautiful legend of S. Martin's youth, his bestowal of the half of his cloak on the beggar at the gate of Amiens, and the appearance of Our Saviour to him the night afterwards, wearing it,—this latter incident is most pleasingly depicted. The third compartment is less easily explicable; it seems to represent S. Martin's investiture with his sword and spurs, by the Emperor Julian; both heads are beautiful. In the fourth is seen his interview with Julian when he renounced his service, offering at the same time to encounter the enemy unarmed on the following day. In the fifth he kneels before S. Hilary, receiving ordination before starting on his mission to Pan-

nonia.* In the sixth is represented the memorable interview when the Emperor's chair took fire under him, because he did not rise to receive him. In the seventh, the angels place golden bracelets on his arms at the moment when, in elevating the host, the sleeves of his borrowed vestment fell back and exposed them,—an attendant, kneeling behind, expresses astonishment at the miracle. In the eighth, he is seen healing a child,—in the ninth on his death-bed, expiring, a most beautiful composition, surrounded by priests and monks, while his soul is carried up by angels to heaven. And, lastly, in the tenth we attend at his funeral ceremony. Besides these, Cardinal Gentile d'Albornoz, the founder of the chapel, is represented kneeling to S. Martin in the lunette over the arch of entrance.†

These frescoes are very charming,—they sink most pleasingly into the mind; the composition is chaste and simple, the figures comparatively few, the

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* Simon has represented him in the correct attitude, receiving the book of exorcisms from the bishop according to the decree of the Council of Toledo. See the 'Rationale' of Durandus, lib. 2, sect. 6.

† Albornoz received his Cardinal's hat in 1342, and died in 1361. The chapel of S. Catherine, now "del Crocefisso," at the extremity of the vestibule opposite the great door of entrance to the Lower church of Assisi, is also said to have been founded by him. The paintings there existing, representing the stories of S. Catherine and S. Agatha, are by a Giottesco of very inferior merit, named Puce of Faenza.—Among the figures of Saints on the columns and walls of the chapel of S. Martin, are two beautiful full-lengths of S. Clara and (according to the tradition of the spot) of Laura.

heads beautiful, the colouring very soft and pleasing, decidedly Sienese, of the succession of Mino; and the manner, though rather more Giottesque, strongly resembles that of the frescoes in the Cappella degli Spagnuoli. Vasari attributes them, but dubiously—"per quello che si conosce," are his words—to Capanna, as he names (erroneously) the painter of the Passion of Christ in the North transept. The Avvocato Carlo Fea, author of the 'Descrizione Ragionata' of the 'basilica' of Assisi, and who repeatedly cites the records of the convent, assumes their authorship by Simon as a matter beyond doubt, and observes that Vasari might have ascertained the fact by comparing the Saints painted within the arch of the window, with the six semi-figures in the South transept, representing S. Francis, S. Antony of Padua, and two female martyrs, by Simon, and the Virgin and child, and S. Elizabeth, (to whom an altar formerly stood there,) by his nephew, Fra Martino—the whole six being ascribed by him to Simon, and the two female martyrs being the same, both there and in the chapel, as well as the peculiar fashion of the *nimbi* or glories.*

This Fra Martino, a hitherto unknown artist, appears from Fea's researches to have been long resident at Assisi; he was paid in 1347 for the Coronation of the Virgin, above the pulpit, on the North wall of the nave, attributed by Vasari to Giottino,—and, in 1358, for other paintings in the

* *Descrizione Ragionata, &c., Roma*, fol. 1820, p. 11.

Refectory.* The former of these dates is so near the time of Simon's death that we may presume the chapel to have been the last great work of that artist. Vasari himself tells us that he left the semi-figures, above alluded to, imperfect, and that they were finished—but here, it seems, he was mistaken—by his brother-in-law, Lippo.

Of Simon's works executed at Avignon, none, I believe, remain.† The patriarchs and prophets in the ancient chapel of the Papal palace, begun by Clement VI., elected in 1342, are probably by one of his pupils and successors; the Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, the highest to the left, are noble figures, majestic in attitude and with broad massive drapery. Laura's portrait, as painted by Simon and eulogised by Petrarch, has, I am afraid, disappeared for ever. The second from the left of the four figures representing the World in the great fresco of the Church Militant, is traditionally said to represent her, as the figure adjacent to the Knight of

* *Descrizione*, &c., pp. 11, 13. Citing a manuscript on vellum, preserved in the Sacristy.

† Except the large miniature in the MS. Virgil, once Petrarch's and now preserved in the Ambrosian Library at Milan. It represents Virgil writing the Georgics, and the occupations of the country, and is inscribed,

"Mantua Virgilium qui talia carmina finxit,
Sena tulit Symonem digito qui talia pinxit."

It is not without merit, but so rude in design and deficient in beauty and delicacy that it is difficult to believe it by Simon di Memmo. It has been engraved (from a tracing) by Rosini, tav. 16.

Rhodes, near its Eastern extremity, is believed to present the likeness of Petrarch,—but these traditions are very doubtful.*

We know singularly little of Simon's personal appearance and character; an allusion by Petrarch, in which he couples him on the score of ugliness with Giotto,† is the chief testimony to the former point, and the affectionate epithet "mio," prefixed to his name in one of the sonnets in which he celebrates his portrait of Laura, to the latter,—but fancy has built many a fair castle of conjecture on scantier foundations than are afforded by this little pronoun.‡

Of his pupils and associates I have already mentioned his brother-in-law Lippo, and Fra Martino; none of the others attained celebrity. The style gradually yielded to that of the rival succession of

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* The heads of these figures, traced from the wall, are engraved in Cicognara, tav. 43.—According to Rosini however, Vasari was mistaken in the figure he points out as Petrarch's—"la tradizione costante, che conservasi fino ai nostri giorni, indica il ritratto del Petrarca nella sesta figura che segue alla sinistra del Papa." *Storia, &c.*, tom. ii, p. 107, and note.

† "Duos ego cognovi," &c. *Vide supra*, tom. ii, p. 177.

‡ These sonnets are printed as the forty-ninth and fiftieth of the first division of Petrarch's poems, written during the life of Laura, in Marsand's edition, 4to, Padua, 1819, pp. 105–6. The passage alluded to in the text occurs in the former, the forty-ninth:—

"Ma certo il mio Simon fu in Paradiso,
Onde questa gentil donna si parte;
Ivi la vide, e la ritrasse in carte,
Per far fede quaggiù del suo bel viso.
L'opra fù ben di quelle, che nel cielo
Si ponno immaginar, non qui fra noi,
Ove le membra fanno all' alma velo."

Duccio, and lay dormant during the remainder of the century.

SECTION 3.—*Pietro and Ambrogio di Lorenzo, &c.*

ONE of the peculiarities of the Sienese school was the transmission of the art in innumerable instances from father to son for many generations, forming so many little artistic communities, with peculiar traditions, practice and public opinion of their own, although they all ranked under the broad comprehensive banners of Mino and Duccio. Such seems to have been the case with a family of which the representatives during the thirty years preceding the plague of 1348, and the ten or twelve that succeeded it, were Pietro and Ambrogio, styled "di Lorenzo," or "Lorenzetto," from the name of their father. These two painters divided the patronage of the republic with their contemporary Simon, during the first of these periods, and flourished without a rival during the second, subsequently to his death. Pietro was probably the eldest, but the point is disputed,—Ambrogio was certainly the more celebrated. Their master is not known, but they unquestionably belong to the dark-colouring and elder branch, of which Duccio was the head and representative; if not his pupils, it is difficult to point out any who merit the praise bestowed upon those pupils by the Sienese chroniclers,—yet if they were so, it is strange that they should not have exhibited from the first certain technical merits which appear only in their later

works. In this uncertainty, and our ignorance respecting the character and influence of Ugolino, we are reduced to a dilemma from which I see no means of escape except in the conjecture that they received for many years no direct assistance or instruction whatever except from their obscure parent, Lorenzetto.

As early as 1319, Pietro appears as a Maestro and in the service of the republic, being employed that year to paint a picture for the church of the Carmelites, at an expense of a hundred and fifty gold florins.* Eleven years afterwards, in 1330, he painted two frescoes on the façade of the great hospital of S. Maria della Scala, the Nativity of the Virgin and her Dedication in the Temple; in these he was assisted by his brother Ambrogio, whose name having been placed last in the inscription would appear to argue his juniority.† These frescoes are attributed to Ambrogio alone by Ghiberti, who adds that Simon di Memmo painted in the two adjacent compartments—and by necessity subsequently to Pietro —the Marriage of the Virgin and the Nativity.‡ The same year, 1330, Ambrogio was employed to decorate the outside of the Palazzo Pubblico with

* Decree cited by Von Rumohr, *Ital. Forschungen*, tom. ii, p. 121.

† These were destroyed by the removal in 1720 of a long *tetto*, or shed, which protected them from the weather. The inscription was preserved by the Cav. Pecci, in his MS. collections. Dellavalle gives the date as 1335,—Rumohr, a more trustworthy authority, as 1330. *L. Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 209; *Ital. Forschungen*, tom. ii, p. 99.

‡ *Vide supra*, p. 20, note.

subjects from Roman history; Angelo Tura, the chronicler, in noticing this commission, styles him "gran maestro."* All these paintings have perished. From this time forward Ambrogio's name continually occurs in the records, as working for the republic; Pietro's is much seldomer mentioned; he apparently found more employment abroad. We will follow the career of each brother separately so far as our imperfect means of information allow.

The great fresco of the Fathers of the Desert, in the Campo Santo at Pisa, has been always attributed to Pietro; it is certainly an early work, as compared with his other paintings of ascertained date. Orcagna, as we shall hereafter find, had previously painted the Triumph of Death, the Last Judgment and the Pains of Hell in three large compartments; a fourth remained vacant, intended originally in all probability for Paradise;† in lieu, however, of a direct representation of that mystic scene, Pietro adopted a symbolical one, more congenial to his taste and skill as an artist, delineating the history of the hermits and anchorets who had led the "angelical life" of celibacy, solitude, fasting, and prayer in the wildernesses of Thebais and Nitria, a class of

* *Lettere Sanesi*, tom. i, p. 216. The preceding year, 1329, Simon di Memmo was paid for a figure of Marcus Regulus in the 'Consistoro dei Nove,' *Ital. Forsch.*, tom. ii, p. 219.—Giotto was employed nearly at this same time by king Robert of Naples in depicting the great men of antiquity in the hall of his palace.

† Death, Judgment, Hell and Paradise, under the title of the 'Quatuor Novissima,' or 'Four Last Things,' formed a very frequent subject of early art.

Saints whose history I have attempted to familiarise you with in my introductory memoranda. The scene of the fresco is a vast mountain landscape, rude as the Menologion, with the Nile flowing in front; individual hermits are scattered throughout, either in their cells or sitting in front of them—one or two of them perfectly naked and covered with shaggy hair, like Mahometan Santons or Indian Yoghis, their kinsfolk in the genealogy of Mysticism; others, more especially the elder, are reading, meditating, weaving baskets, &c., the younger fishing, felling trees, or attendant upon the aged; a company of four, admirable figures, near the right extremity of the fresco, are attributed to Antonio Veneziano. Various incidents from the biographies of S. Jerome and the early hagiographers are intermingled with these more general sketches of the ascetic life, as, for example, the visit of S. Antony to the proto-hermit Paul, his discovery of the dead body of the latter on his return from his monastery, the two lions digging the grave, S. Antony's repulse of the devil disguised as a woman, his flagellation by demons, his vision of Our Saviour, S. Hilarion's conquest of the dragon in Dalmatia by the sign of the cross, the penitence of Mary Magdalen and her reception of the Eucharist, and (to name no more) the voluntary abasement of S. Marina—sitting humbly at the door of the monastery, with the child in her arms that had been fathered upon her, passing as she did for a monk under the name of Marinus—a figure full of grace and tenderness.

This fresco bears a strong resemblance to parts of the Triumph of Death by Orcagna, the first of the series of which it is the completion, as well as to the ancient Byzantine paintings which delineate the life of the desert; the types and ideas of Pietro are all traceable to that source. His colouring, though dark comparatively with that of Simon di Memmo and the Giotteschi, is softer and more feminine than that of Orcagna, the daring Dantesque Florentine. In point of composition, as a whole, nothing can be more rude and artless—no chiaro-scuro, no aërial perspective, no central point for the eye to repose upon—the figures are of the same stature and proportion throughout; but the individual groups are excellent, and the graceful and sweet feeling of the artist appeals to the heart in spite of technical demerit.*

The next surviving work of Pietro is the Madonna and child, with attendant angels, signed with his name and dated 1340, originally at Pistoja, now in the Gallery of the Uffizj at Florence. This has every appearance of having been painted long after the fresco in the Campo Santo, although Vasari says that Pietro went to Pistoja straight from Pisa. The composition is studiously symmetrical, producing a singularly calming effect, which is increased by the preponderance of blue in the draperies, producing, in an inferior degree, the same unearthly impression of heavenly glory and peace that thrills us in the

* See Rio, *De la Poésie Chrétienne*, p. 52. This fresco is engraved by Lasinio in the large work on the Campo Santo.

paintings of Fra Angelico. This was certainly a deviation from Pietro's usual style of colouring; he had relapsed into it in 1342, as appears from a picture in the Sacristy of the Duomo at Siena,—and his original taste, not merely in colouring, but in feeling and composition, reappears in all its peculiarity, although infinitely improved and matured, in a little one in the Florentine gallery—a repetition of that subject of his peculiar predilection, the life of the Fathers of the Desert,—a picture deserving in every way of a much minuter description than I have space to bestow upon it. You may spend, not merely minutes, but hours in exploring it—with more ease and little less pleasure than would be afforded by an actual pilgrimage in those dreary regions.

The scene or background is an extensive range of mountain, craggy and precipitous, interspersed with hermits' cells and monasteries, round each of which shrubs and trees have been planted by their inmates —the fathers of gardening, and grandsires (through their spiritual progeny in Europe) of modern Agriculture. The Nile, descending from a distant gorge, sweeps past in front, as you survey the scene from the hills on the hither side; the river is covered with vessels in mystical motion—one rushing along, every oar at work but without (visible) rowers—another, full of devils, bearing a soul to hell,—two monks on the further shore clasp their hands and intercede for it with God; in others are hermits fishing—one, in which an anchoret is reading, the

wind is doing its utmost to capsize; everything indicates the immemorial war of Matter with Spirit.

Proceeding along the river-bank, we come to an aged hermit in front of his cell, resuscitating a cock, lying on the ground dead, while the fox that murdered him steals away very much ashamed of himself; the law of mutual destruction, that charter of bliss to the animal creation,* was quite unknown to these Christian gymnosophists, whose miracles were repeatedly worked in direct contrariety to it.—The story of S. Helenus next catches the eye—his encounter, apparently, with the crocodile, which he first constrained to carry him across the Nile, and then killed with the sign of the cross. Pietro seems, however, to have followed another version of the legend,—he has introduced a bridge, which we may take advantage of to cross the river.—Proceeding up the valley on the opposite bank, but still keeping our eyes fixed on the one we have quitted, we next discover a cell, in the verandah of which two monks sit reading, while a third watches his line, with the abstracted gaze of a genuine Piscator. Beyond this, S. Florentinus amuses himself with a bear, the solace of his lonely hours; he appears to be teaching it to dance—at least, it is exactly the attitude; this group is admirable.—A little further

* See Dr. Buckland's Bridgewater Treatise, chap. xiii, entitled the "Aggregate of Animal Enjoyment increased, and that of Pain diminished, by the existence of Carnivorous Races."—It is one of our 'Vulgar Errors' to suppose that death was introduced into the animal world through the Fall.

on, in front of another cell, an aged hermit passes by, riding on a leopard, and behind him a sparkling stream comes dancing down from the heights.

Behind these figures—throwing the eye upwards over a broad sheet of sand descending between the rocks, and so truly depicted that I could almost fancy the painter had visited the East—is represented the interment of S. Paul by S. Antony in the grave dug by the two lions for his reception,—and further on, in front of a cave and under a date-tree, the interview of the two Saints and partition of the loaf, with the crow flying away. The ground here is covered with broken stones.*

Quitting the river at this point and striking up a gorge to the left, you will emerge on the range of mountain scenery more directly in front of the picture,—I need not accompany you step by step through your further progress, but you will find ample entertainment, and may form acquaintance with hermits of all ranks and ages—those of superior sanctity walled up in their dens, their shaggy faces peering out like that of John of Lycopolis in the interview with the eunuch of Theodosius, so graphically described by Gibbon—others, bowed with age, walking or riding, sometimes on wild animals, reduced to paradisaical tameness in this spiritual monarchy of the desert, sometimes carried luxuriously in litters by the younger monks, and adored on their

* It may be accidental, but the cave of S. Paul, &c., is here represented correctly to the East of the river Nile,—if so, the district to the West must be that of Nitria, Scitis, &c.

knees by their humbler brethren as they pass by and bless them—the middle-aged and younger, reading, conversing or dining together, or performing menial offices for the elder, or tempted, while alone, by Devils in the shape of young ladies, the Satanic claw always peeping out from beneath the scarlet petticoat. The variety of occupation and of incident is endless, and the whole scene is so animated and fresh that it almost makes one long to be a hermit oneself.

Re-descending to the shore, by the valley at the left extremity of the composition, and just at the point where the mountains recede and a little plain intervenes between their foot and the river, your attention will be attracted by two distinct scenes, pictures within the picture, each perfect in itself, and forming unitedly the summary and moral of the whole. The one to the right represents the Contemplative life in its most attractive aspect; the cell or monastery is surrounded by a large garden, hedged with shrubs and flowers, and protected from the mountain blasts by a wood behind—part of it, separated by a paling opening with a wicket, serves as a kitchen-garden; the monks are either working in it or reposing under a verandah at the door of their home,—the other depicts the death-scene; the funeral service is being read over the remains of a venerable hermit—monks and devotees are collected round, in the deepest sorrow—a middle-aged hermit, sitting in a car drawn by lions, and reading, accompanied by a young attendant carrying his staff, descends towards them from the mountains. The

mourning group is most admirable both in composition and expression, and resembles that in the highly finished and very curious Greek picture of S. Ephraim, described already, in the Museum Christianum of the Vatican.*

I have been beguiled into a longer notice than I intended of a picture, diminutive at first sight, but not unworthy of it as the sole relic of Pietro worthy of his reputation. But its merits are, in truth, of a very high order. The landscape, although certainly little better than in the similar composition at Pisa, or the Menologion, is fresh from the heart of the painter, and his trees, though as absurdly out of proportion as the figures, evince his love and admiration of nature,—among them you may recognise the doûm-tree or Theban palm, which he must have copied from some Coptic painting, as the tree does not grow in Lower Egypt,†—the spirit too of the desert scenery is as true as if he had lived in it himself. The animals, moreover, are full of life and character, superior, I think, to any previously done in Italy. The human figures are admirable, minute as miniature, and as highly finished, but with no loss of freedom, sometimes even graceful, while the heads are almost invariably expressive, the grouping and

* This group has been engraved, after a tracing from the original, in Rosini. tav. 17.

† The doûm-tree occurs also in a large and very curious *terra cotta* of the fifteenth century, by Luca della Robbia, representing the Incredulity of S. Thomas, in the 'Chiesa di Rippoli,' Florence.

attitudes full of nature and simplicity. Freshness of feeling and the naïveté that results from it are everywhere apparent, and the dark-green colouring is peculiarly in harmony with the subject.

Nowhere in short, in art, has the spirit of the Contemplative Ascetic life, so seducing to the Imagination, so deadly to the Reason, so charming in theory, such a hell in practice, (as the history of these very Saints reveals it,) found so sympathetic or eloquent an expression as in this little picture and in the fresco of the Campo Santo,—there, indeed, its quietism seems the leading idea, here we have more of its temptations and vain-glory, but the predominant feeling is alike in each—abstraction from the world of Matter, and mystical absorption into the Deity.

I have little more to say of Pietro di Lorenzetto. His last works were in the Pieve, or parish-church, at Arezzo, and in S. Peter's at Rome; the latter of course perished when that museum of early art was destroyed by Julius II.,—the former were executed in 1355, and are described by Vasari in terms that make us vividly regret their loss. Twelve compositions, representing the life of the Virgin, and all beautiful, covered the walls of the principal chapel, but were surpassed by that in the vault of the tribune, depicting her Assumption; the airs of the heads, the beauty of the drapery, the rapturous joy of the attendant angels, singing and gazing after her as they rose all together, though in distinct groups, to

heaven, were unsurpassed (he says) by any productions of the period.

We must now return to Siena, and to the more distinguished of the two brothers, Ambrogio. Many of his early works are specified in the public records, but none survive except the allegorical frescoes of the 'Sala delle Balestre,' in the Palazzo Pubblico, representing Good and Evil Government, and their consequences on human happiness. They have suffered much from time and restoration, but are still sufficiently preserved to repay examination.

Beginning with the large compartment facing the window, you will observe two majestic figures, male and female, enthroned in state at the opposite extremities of the composition; the former represents Good Government, the latter (to all appearance) Siena. The three Theological Virtues, Faith, with her cross, Charity, with her burning heart, and Hope, gazing upwards towards heaven, float in the air above Good Government, as his guides and inspiration; various Virtues, his attributes and coadjutors, are seated to the right and left,—Magnanimity, with a plate of money, Temperance, with the hour-glass, Justice, with the sword in one hand, a crown in the other, and a human head in her lap—Prudence, Fortitude and Peace—the last a very graceful figure, strikingly reminding one of the antique sculptures, the outlines of her form clearly visible through her thin drapery, and seated in an attitude of repose;

the name of 'Aula Pacis,' or 'Hall of Peace,' by which this chamber was commonly designated in the fifteenth century,* was doubtless bestowed in compliment to this figure.

Nor is the personification of Siena less honourably attended. Round her head is inscribed the text, "Diligite justitiam qui judicatis terram;" Wisdom, the sum and concentration of the preceding virtues of Good Government, crowned and robed in a leopard's skin, floats above her, holding the balance, directing and inspiring her counsels; on her left, Retribution, or Distributive Justice, winged, beheads a malefactor with one hand and crowns a just man with the other; on her right Justice Commutative appears to be exchanging pardon for a pecuniary equivalent, according to the old Lombard *lex talionis*, —while Concord, at her feet, glues two pieces of wood together, looking significantly at the same time towards a long procession of citizens, the nobles dressed in red, the commons in black and white, who approach to offer their homage, filling the whole front of the composition—a wholesome hint to the rival factions that then distracted Siena.†

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* See a passage of Tizio, quoted by Dellavalle, *L. Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 214, which proves also that this and the inner room were both styled 'Balistarum' or 'delle Balestre' in his time.

† The explanatory inscription below this fresco is given as follows by Dellavalle from the MSS. of Landi, *L. Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 221.

"Questa santa virtù là dove regge
Induce ad unità li animi molti;
E questi, acciò richolti, Un

Turning to the wall on the right hand, beyond the figure of Good Government, you will observe his beneficent influences portrayed in a large fresco, divided into two compartments, representing the life of the city and the country; in the former, a bridal procession, a dance of seven virgins, (very graceful and resembling those attributed to Simon di Memmo in the Cappella degli Spagnuoli at Florence,) a professor lecturing from his desk, and a party of peasants entering the town, successively attract the eye; outside the gates, the scene expands into a far extended landscape, traversable in every direction without fear of danger, as witnessed by 'Security,' flying naked in the air, exhibiting a malefactor suspended from a gibbet. A party of ladies and gentlemen on horse-

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Un ben comun per lor Signor si fanno,
Lo qual, per governar suo stato, elegge
Di non tener giammai gli occhi rivolti
Dallo splendor de' volti
Dalle virtù che torno a lui si stanno.
Per questo con trionfo allui si danno
Censi, tributi e signorie di terre;
Per questo, senza guerre,
Seguita poi ogni civile effetto,
Utile, necessario e di diletto.[a]

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[a] "Where Concord, holy virtue, rules supreme,
Sweetly subdued, the various minds of men
In Unity combine—and they in turn
The Common Welfare as their Lord elect.
He, for his part, intent on Public Good,
Willeth his eyes for ever fixed and stilled
On those bright stars of loveliness and light,
The choir of Virtues that around him stand.
Hence to his feet, in peaceful triumph, flow
Tribute and tax, and lordships of the earth;
Hence, without War, Civility's fair boon,
All things of Use, of Need, and of Delight."

back are issuing from the city-gates; nearer the window are represented the peaceful occupations of a peasantry fearless of war and rapine—a man bringing a pig to market, &c. &c.*

Lastly, on the opposite wall, we have in two similar compartments the rule and miseries of Evil Government, personified by a male figure, correspondent in size to those of Good Government and of Siena—Siena being thus seated equidistantly between them. He is painted with horns, holding a

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* This fresco too was formerly explained by a sonnet, now illegible, which I transcribe from the *Lettere Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 218, amending the punctuation, here as elsewhere, where necessary for intelligibility.

" Volgiete gli occhi a riguardar costei,
Vo che reggiete! ch' è qui figurata,
E per su ecciellentia coronata,
La qual sempre a ciascun suo dritto rende.
Guardate quanti ben vengan da lei,
E come è dolce vita e riposata
Quella della città dov' è servata
Questa virtù che più d' altra risplende.
Ella guarda e diffende
Chi lei onora, e lor nutrica e pascie;
Dalla sua lucie nascie
El meritar color ch' operar bene,
Et agl' iniqui dar debite pene." a

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a Now turn ye hither,—fix your eyes on her,
Ye who bear rule! thus figured to your gaze,
Unarmed and naked, but a crowned queen,
Virtue's calm satellite, Security—
She who to each ever his right assures.
Behold what blessings spring from her—and mark
How sweet the life, unruffled the repose,
Of State and People where she deigns to dwell.
Who honour her She watches and defends,
Feeds them and nourishes—in Her clear light
Merit shines forth, of gentle nurture born,
And fitting chastisement o'ertakes th' unjust."

cup in his hand, his feet resting on a goat, the emblem of lust or licence; Tyranny, holding a sword and a pair of broken scales, Vain Glory, eyeing herself in a mirror, and Avarice, holding a sceptre and a money-bag, hover above him, and he is attended, to the right and left, by Fraud, with bats' wings and holding a candle, by Treachery, carrying a lamb, by Cruelty, strangling a child, by Terror, in the shape of a monster, by Sedition, in the character of Sinon, and by Revenge,—while, as the consummation of all, Justice lies at the foot of the throne, disarmed, chained and powerless.—Further on, in the second compartment, we have, as on the opposite wall, the City and the Country, as subject to the rule of Evil Government. Fear flies in advance, with her scroll of lamentations and woe, and below are seen all the horrors of unbridled licence, rapine, bloodshed, robbery, murder. But this part of the fresco is so defaced that it is impossible to make out more than the general idea, as expressed in the verses of the scroll borne by Fear,

"Per voler il ben proprio in questa terra
Sommessa la giustizia a tirannia,
Unde per questa via
Non passa alcun senza dubbio di morte,
Che fuor si ruba e dentro delle porte." *

* "Behold the issue, where Self-Will prevails—
Justice disarmed, put down by Tyranny;
The ways are desert, the way-farers cease,—
None can pass by for jeopardy of life,
For Rapine rules within and forth the gate."

—From the accomplished character of Ambrogio, as described by Vasari, we may presume these inscriptions to be of his own composition.

This is a very remarkable work, full of poetry, full of thought—unconnected and isolated, indeed, in its individual parts, but the leading and central idea is conveyed forcibly to the mind, and a grander moral lesson was never bequeathed by painter or poet to his countrymen, or one more needed in the peculiar circumstances of Siena. It portrays, in a word, the Ideal of civilization in a single state, as the fresco of the Church Militant in the chapel of the Spaniards does that of the Universal Empire of Christendom; the theory of government there diffused over the world, is here concentrated to a point, and recommended by the exhibition on the one hand of the blessings attendant on its recognition, on the other, of the mischief and misery consequent on its rejection. Nor is the execution altogether unequal to the conception; the colouring, though sadly faded, is very soft and pleasing, and the figures (making allowance for a thousand technical defects) have much grace and dignity. Ambrogio evidently shared fully in the love for the country, which we have remarked in the works of his brother Pietro and Simon di Memmo. The Sienese of the fourteenth century seem to have had much more sentiment, if the expression may be used, than the Florentines; a gay, cheerful, happy spirit, animated by a lofty love of freedom, and hallowed by an all-pervading reverence for religion, may be said to characterise all their early productions in art.*

* A few years afterwards—in 1344, according to Tizio, (*L. Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 213,)—Ambrogio painted a "Mappamundo

It is not to be denied, however, that these frescoes have the appearance of immaturity in an equal degree with that of Pietro in the Campo Santo; it is surprising therefore how rapid an improvement Ambrogio evinces in his beautiful picture in tempera, painted for the Duomo, but now in the Academy at Florence, and bearing his name and the date 1342, three years only subsequently to that of the Sala delle Balestre. The figures are full of dignity and grace, the composition symmetrical and pleasing, the colouring very soft, and inclining to the lighter tints of Simon rather than those he had originally derived from the school represented by Duccio.*

I regret to add that the best and most celebrated of Ambrogio's works, the frescoes in the cloister of S. Francesco at Siena, survive only in the eulogy of Ghiberti. They represented the career of a young Franciscan missionary, — his investiture with the habit by the Superior, his mission to Paynimrie at his own request, and accompanied by some brother monks of equal enthusiasm, to convert the Saracens,

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volubilis et rotunda," apparently a globe, in the second or inner chamber "delle Balestre," subsequently named after it the 'Sala del Mappamundo.' It is alluded to by Ghiberti with the self-complacency of an age of incipient learning, "Evvi una cosmografia, cioè tutta la terra abitabile,—non c'era allora notizia della cosmografia di Tolomeo; non è da meravigliare se la sua non è perfetta." He seems to have been much pleased with the paintings in the adjoining chamber.

* This would appear to be the picture seen by Dellavalle (*L. Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 225,) at the Spedaletto of S. Agnes, for which it was painted according to Vasari, and which Rosini says (*Storia, &c.*, tom. i, p. 142,) has disappeared.

—their arrest and flagellation before the Soldan,—their preaching to the people after being suspended by his order to a tree,—their decapitation—at which moment a thunder-storm from above and an earthquake from below mingled earth and heaven in fear and confusion—the Justiciary was thrown from his horse and killed—soldiery and spectators, horsemen and foot, fled on every side for safety, the soldiers protecting their heads with their shields from the pelting hail-stones, the spectators holding up their robes for shelter, while the winds, let loose, bent the trees to the ground or broke them asunder in their fury—"a marvellous thing truly," observes Ghiberti, "for a painted picture,"—and nothing shews more clearly the merit of the series than the lengthened description it has elicited from him — there is no parallel to it throughout his Memoir.* "The Sienese," he adds, "consider Simon superior to Ambrogio; to me, on the contrary, Ambrogio appears the best, *e altrimenti dotto che nessuno degli altri*—more profoundly learned than any of them."

The frescoes of the Capitolo of S. Agostino, representing the history of S. Catherine,† have also been destroyed. In short, both of Pietro and Ambrogio

* See his 'Commentario' in Cicognara, tom. ii, p. 102.—Ghiberti deals in superlatives, but as he speaks only of the greatest masters, they are seldom too strong; "famosissimo e singularissimo maestro..nobilissimo compositore..perfettissimo maestro..uomo di grande ingegno..nobilissimo disegnatore.. molto perito nella teorica di detta arte," are the epithets of admiration he bestows on Ambrogio.

† Attributed to him by Ghiberti.

we possess early and comparatively inferior specimens only, and may be thankful that what time has spared us is as beautiful as it is.

But the perfume of a good man's memory survives the transient flourish of his genius, and that of Ambrogio di Lorenzo will be immortal. "He had studied literature in his youth," says Vasari, "and found her a useful and pleasant companion in his riper years, shedding grace alike on his paintings and on his life, rendering him no less agreeable and amiable as a man than excellent as an artist,—procuring him not only the continual society and commerce of the learned and the refined, but honour and interest as a statesman in the affairs of his country. His manners and habits of life were in every respect commendable, and those rather of a gentleman and a philosopher than of an artist,—ever content with the blessings of the hour and the opportunity, and welcoming with the same moderate and quiet mind the smiles and the frowns of fortune,—an example, in short, of that modesty and virtue which should accompany and accredit all the arts, but most especially those which are offspring of the intellect and of genius. And so," he concludes, "Ambrogio passed happily and religiously from this life to a better, shortly after completing his eighty-third year." He is last mentioned in 1377, the date of a payment for paintings in the Palazzo Pubblico at Siena.* Pietro had died apparently many years before.

* *Lettere Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 216. The date may be inaccu-

The influence of these distinguished brothers was predominant in the Sienese school during the remainder of the century, although none of their pupils rivalled their ability or fame. The plague of 1348 had crippled the state, and almost depopulated the city;* her life-blood drained, she sat like one palsied for many years afterwards, and the debilitating influence was felt in every branch of art, far more than at Florence; the works of the Cathedral were discontinued—sculptures of this period there are few or none; it was only at Bologna and in Lombardy that her sculptors found employment,†—and of the paintings, the best were done for towns of secondary consideration, by artists whose ambition to excel was neutralised by their expatriation, by their individual isolation, by the honours paid them by the admiring communities among whom they dwelt, each in his art a Mino or a Duccio,—by their having, in a word, no common arena at home, where they might compete for praise "in the presence of all their brethren,"—to say nothing of that

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rate, but it is not corrected in the Errata.—The preceding imperfect notice of Ambrogio would doubtless have been much fuller and more interesting had the Essay on his life and character by Signor Carlo Milanesi of Siena, announced by Professor Rosini, made its appearance.

* "In questo tempo s'abbandonò in Siena el grande e nobile edifizio dello accrescimento del Duomo..per la poca gente che rimase in Siena." *Chronicle of Buondone and Bisdomini*, cited in the *L. Sanesi*, tom. i, p. 188.—"Io considero Siena," says Dellavalle, "ne' dodici anni consecutivi a quello della peste, come in uno stato di convalescenza." *Ibid.*, tom. ii, p. 41.

† *Vide supra*, tom. ii, p. 141.

mysterious law by which the birth of Individual genius seems to be regulated, in strict correspondence to the elevation or depression of National and Universal intellect.

The best of these artists, or at least those whose surviving works are least deserving of neglect, were Ugolino di Prete Ilario, of Orvieto, Bartolo di Maestro Fredi, Andrea di Vanni, Fra Martino di Bartolommeo, Bernardo, commonly called Berna, and Pietro di Puccio, of Orvieto; it is only in the two last, the youngest apparently of the six, that we observe any progress or improvement, but the works of their elder contemporaries are in some respects equally interesting, and deserve a rapid enumeration.

First among these may be mentioned the frescoes of the tribune of the Duomo at Orvieto, attributed to Ambrogio by Vasari, but now ascertained to be by Ugolino,* pupil of Pietro, or, as I should conjecture, of both brothers conjointly, previous to their separation. They represent the life of the Virgin, in twenty-eight compartments,—twenty-two, in two rows, circulating round the chapel, carry the history from the Repulse of Joachim to the Dispute in the Temple; it is resumed above the Eastern window with her dying interview with the Apostles, her Death, her Burial and Resurrection, and concludes with her Assumption and Coronation,† this last occu-

* As proved by original records in the 'Storia del Duomo di Orvieto,' by Dellavalle, p. 285.—He was assisted by Pietro di Puccio, probably his pupil.

† I may mention, among the more interesting or unusual com-

pying a large lunette on the vault of the chapel, the three corresponding spaces being filled with personations of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, each attended by angels; the twelve prophets are depicted at full length on the North and South walls, parallel to the Assumption, and below them again the Apostles, six on either side, each holding a scroll containing the article which he contributed to the creed,* within the jambs or hollow of the rose-windows, attended to the right and left respectively by the Evangelists and Doctors of the Church. While, lastly, lowest of all, and immediately above the wooden stalls of the choir, a line of forty half-figures represent the Fathers and Doctors who have originated the honorary titles and epithets of the Madonna.†

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positions, the sixth of the series, the Dedication of the Virgin, in which she is represented as quite a child, in conformity with the Apocryphal Gospels,—the eleventh, the Return of Joseph and Mary to Nazareth, and their welcome home,—the nineteenth, representing Our Saviour kneeling at the door of the temple, on being brought to Jerusalem for the feast,—the twentieth, Joseph and Mary, (each of whom had supposed him with the other, the caravans of men and women travelling separately on such occasions,) discovering his absence,—the twenty-first, their finding him in the temple,—and in the upper compartments, the Virgin's death, alone, Our Saviour waiting to receive her soul, &c.

* So too had Ambrogio depicted them in his frescoes of the chapter-house of S. Agostino at Siena. *Vasari, in vitâ.*

† Among them Dellavalle enumerates Pope Celestine, S. Cyril and S. Basil, the defenders of her early epithet, "Mother of God;" S. Gregory of Nyssa, who describes or apostrophises her as the "Light of the Deity;" S. Gregory Nazianzen, as "Virgin Goddess;" S. Chrysostom, as "Star among the clouds;" S. Jerome, as "a cloud of light;" S. Augustine, as the "living taber-

These frescoes are very faded, and in many places barely distinguishable; there is little beauty or force in them, but a degree of naïveté and simple feeling that is very pleasing; the compositions however are much inferior to the execution, and frequently very novel and original; and the conjecture naturally arises that the best of them may have been borrowed from those of Pietro at Arezzo, eulogised by Vasari. The chapel was painted in 1370; Ugolino had executed as early as 1356 the frescoes of the chapel of the S. Corporale, now almost totally destroyed, and which are attributed by Vasari to Cavallini, a Semi-Byzantine, as you will remember, before he became a Giottesco.*

Of Bartolo di Maestro Fredi, the son of a painter of inferior merit, but whom the epithet of 'Magnificus' has invested with the robe of nobility in the

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nacle of the Trinity;" S. Athanasius, as the "Regeneratrix of humanity;" S. John Damascenus, as the "Gate of Paradise;" S. Fulgentius, as the "Gate of Heaven;" the patriarch Hesychius, as the "Ark of the human race;" S. Anselm of Mantua, as the "Queen of heaven and earth, exalted above the angels;" S. Bernard, as the "Temple of the Divine Glory;" Innocent III., as "Empress of Angels;" Albertus Magnus, as the "Mediatrix who reconciled the world to God;" Dionysius, the Carthusian, the 'Ecstatic Doctor,' as the "Fellow (*Compagna*) of the Most Holy Trinity," &c. &c.—*Storia del Duomo, &c.*, p. 206. —The portrait indeed of the last-named writer, as well as that of S. Antoninus, enumerated in Dellavalle's list, must have been added or substituted long subsequently to Ugolino's time.—I give these epithets as quoted by Dellavalle—whether correctly, or in all cases from genuine writings, I cannot say.

* *Storia del Duomo, &c.*, p. 283.—Ugolino was then working in company with one Maestro Giovanni.

eyes of posterity, the most important works are to be found at S. Gimignano, the little town which I have already mentioned, and for which every visitor forms so warm an affection. They were executed in 1356, and cover the Northern aisle of the Pieve, or parish-church; the most interesting, perhaps, is the compartment representing Job and his wife feasting with their sons and daughters; some of the costumes are curious, yet they are but indifferent productions, and have been much retouched and injured. This painter is chiefly interesting as the father of Taddeo di Bartolo, the celebrated reviver of the Sienese school towards the close of the century.

Andrea di Vanni too owes the interest attached to his name to considerations foreign to his individual merit as an artist. He is described as the son of Maestro Vanni, the son of Maestro Bindi, the son of Maestro Guido,* the painter, it is presumed, of the Madonna of 1221, at S. Domenico; and almost the sole relic of his pencil surviving, a Virgin and child in S. Stefano, (so dark in its colouring and so Byzantine in its types as almost of itself to vindicate this descent,) has a predella attached to it, painted by Giovanni di Paolo—possibly therefore his pupil—one of the leading Sienese artists of the fifteenth century, and the father of Matteo di Giovanni, the last of the school—thus linking together the whole

* *Lettere Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 140. I ought to have observed, that the title 'Maestro,' though appertaining by right to the masters in all trades or professions, was conceded *par excellence*, by the universal courtesy of Siena, to the painters.

race and succession from Guido downwards. Almost all Andrea's works have perished—the most celebrated of them represented Our Saviour bearing his cross to Calvary, in the chapel attached to the Campanile of the Duomo; it was the tradition of Siena that the Wandering Jew, passing through the city, declared the likeness perfectly correct.*—Andrea was a man of rank and consideration in the state, was sent as one of three ambassadors to the Pope at Avignon in 1373, and some of the letters of S. Catherine of Siena, urging the return of the Holy See to Rome, were there addressed to him. His name occurs in the public records from the middle to the end of the century.†

The works of Fra Martino di Bartolommeo seem to have been in the same dry uninteresting style, which possibly may have been derived from the influence of Ugolino rather than that of Pietro and Ambrogio. The emblematic Virtues, already noticed, on the vaults of the Sala della Balia, of which the walls are painted by Spinello, are his best works; as paintings, they are very feeble and poor, but the allegorism is ingenious; Nobility, for instance, is represented with a lamb, the type of meekness,—Discretion by the keen-eyed eagle, Pity by a maiden with a little bird perched on her shoulder, Fortitude by a woman tearing open a lion's mouth, &c.

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* As reported by Tizio, *Lett. Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 142.

† The name of a M. Andrea di Vanni occurs as working at Orvieto in 1321 as a glass-painter, *Storia del Duomo, &c.* pp. 106, 272. But they can hardly have been identical.

Here too should be ranked the curious fresco in the Sala del Consiglio, attributed by Vasari to Ambrogio di Lorenzo, and evidently of his school, though by an inferior and unknown hand. It commemorates an interesting and characteristic trait in the history of Siena. In 1363, the Company of the Cappello, then in the pay of Florence and commanded by the condottiere Count Niccolò of Montefeltro, had paid a hostile visit to the Sienese territory, entered the Valdichiana, and laid everything waste,—all the spoil was sent within the Florentine frontier. The 'Signori Dodici,' then rulers of the city, had sought in vain for an accommodation. They had at the moment two German knights in their pay, with four hundred soldiers, all *tramontani*, —they had a thousand gentlemen of their own, natives of the State, besides three hundred crossbowmen, and several hundred citizens able to bear arms, —it was in the flush of convalescence after the plague of 1348. Ceccolo degli Orsini, a brother of the great Roman house, was their 'Capitano di Guerra,' or military leader; they put their forces under his command, giving him strict injunctions not to fight, but to drive the Company out of the State. Ser Paolo Nini, their Prior or president, gave the army the name of S. Paul as their watchword, as they defiled past him and quitted the city.

Arrived in the Valdichiana, they found the enemy near Turrita, the native town of our old acquaintance Fra Mino, the mosaicist; disregarding orders, Orsini rushed to attack them; a battle ensued, in which

Messer Ugo dell' Ala, the leader of the Germans, captured Count Niccolò with his own arm, and took his banner; the Company, after a stout defence, fled on all sides, numbers were killed, all the chief men were taken, and Orsini, with his troops, returned victorious to Siena. They were welcomed with great rejoicings and with princely magnificence; each soldier received a month's pay,—all the horses killed in the action, more than three hundred in number, were replaced,—a solemn mass was celebrated in the Cathedral the following morning, and thank-offerings were plentifully laid on the altars; the Signori entertained Orsini at a sumptuous banquet in the Palazzo Pubblico—knighted him, presented him with a palfrey, a sword, a cap, a cuirass, and a crown of gold, costing in all eight hundred gold florins—in his character of a victorious general — and then cashiered him as a disobedient officer. The prisoners were released at the expiration of six months, on solemnly engaging never again to serve against Siena, and took their leave loaded with presents by the private citizens and the republic. And finally, the fresco in question was ordered to be painted at the expense of the State in the great hall of the palace,* occupying about half the wall opposite the windows and nearest to the Madonna of Mino, the remainder

* See for the preceding facts the 'Cronica Sanese' of Neri di Donato, printed in Muratori's great collection, tom. xv, col. 178, ending "La detta sconfitta li Signori Dodici la fero dipegnare in Palazzo nella *Sala delle Balestre*,"—from which it would appear that the great Council-hall was termed so at that time.

being filled above a hundred years afterwards by a similar composition, representing the defeat of the Florentines at Poggio Imperiale by the Dukes of Calabria and Urbino at the head of the troops of the Pope, the King of Naples, and of Siena—an inglorious event in an inglorious war, and which by a reverse of the usual order of things derives its chief interest from the painting which commemorates it.* Both frescoes resemble each other in style, and might have been painted in the same century. They remind one of the Theban sculptures of the wars of Rameses; in each a bird's-eye view is given of the country, like an immense map, with the march of the armies, their skirmishes and battles duly depicted —every leader with his armorial bearings, and every hill, every streamlet, every village with its name,— displaying little genius truly, but still very amusing and full of instruction as to the costumes and military life of the age.

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* See the 'Diarj Sanesi' of Allegretto Allegretti, in the twenty-third volume of Muratori's collection, col. 796. The presents given by the republic to its noble allies on the close of the campaign—very different in style from those laid at the feet of Ceccolo degli Orsini—are enumerated with amusing speciality:—"A dì detto el Commune di Siena mandò al Duca di Calavria un ricco e degno presente; cioè, vitelle, castroni, capponi, biada, pane, vino, marzapani, mandorle, raggea; ci era fagiani, pollastre, pipioni, e altre cose in buona quantità.—E un simile presente al Signore di Camerino. .E un' altro simile presente al Duca d'Urbino."—The old Italian chroniclers, it may be observed, reflect the sentiments of the laity, as the German, English and French (with a few noted exceptions) do those of the clergy. This makes them much more interesting.

But I owe Berna and Pietro di Puccio an ample apology for having postponed them so long to these less distinguished artists. Berna is supposed to have been a pupil of Pietro di Lorenzo. His life, says Vasari, was short, but from the multitude of his works one would presume it long; he mentions several of them, praising their spirit and expression; he was the first, he says, to design animals correctly,—but in this, as we have already observed, he had been anticipated, not merely by his master Pietro, but by Stefano and Giotto. A fresco in which a youth was led to execution, attended by a priest, seems to have been greatly admired, as well as another at Arezzo, of a mariner who had sold himself to the devil, but was saved by the intercession of S. Marino,—Berna's employment in that city may account for a certain resemblance in manner between some of his paintings and those of Spinello.

Of his existing works, the most pleasing are the frescoes on the tabernacle, or ciborium, in S. Giovanni Laterano at Rome, erected by Urban V., in 1367, to receive the heads of S. Peter and S. Paul; they are very graceful, with a leaning to the softer style and flowing lines of the succession of Mino.* His latest works are in the Pieve of S. Gimignano—a series of frescoes representing the history of the New Testament, in the Southern nave; he was still occupied on the upper compartments, when a fall from the scaffold occasioned his death, in 1381. The

* They are engraved in Agincourt, *Peinture*, pl. 129.

S. Gimignanesi buried him honourably in the scene of his disaster, and for months afterwards continued to hang epitaphs and sonnets over his grave.* The remaining compartments were finished by his pupil, Giovanni d' Asciano, but probably from his master's designs; I may mention the Judas receiving the thirty pieces of silver as one of the best, the Agony in the Garden, the Arraignment of Our Saviour before Caiaphas, and the Crucifixion — the same Byzantine composition so constantly reiterated by Buffalmacco, Cavallini, Simon di Memmo, &c. Grief is sadly caricatured, and the design throughout is bad.

Luca di Tome, another pupil of Berna, and who seems to have been chiefly employed at Orvieto, was likewise of but inferior merit; what I have seen of his is extremely hard and rough.

Pietro di Puccio, the last of these predecessors of Taddeo di Bartolo, was a native of Orvieto, and pupil probably of Ugolino di Prete Ilario, under whom he worked in the tribune of the Duomo in 1370. Between 1381 and 1387 he reappears as a mosaicist and painter, with the title of Maestro, in the employ of the Cathedral; the records show him to have been dissatisfied with his remuneration,† and this probably induced his ready acceptance of an express invitation to Pisa, which he received from the Conservators of the Campo Santo, in 1390.‡

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* "Per essere naturalmente gli uomini di quel paese dediti alle buone lettere." *Vasari.*

† *Dellavalle, Storia del Duomo di Orvieto*, p. 288.

‡ *Ciampi, Notizie Inedite, &c.*, p. 150.

He there painted the 'Hystoria Genesis' and the Coronation of the Virgin, frequently referred to in the books of the Operajo during that and the two following years.* The first of the series represents the 'Dio Padre,' or God the Father, of gigantic stature, embracing and sustaining the orb of creation; the earth appears in the midst, surrounded in concentric circles by the elementary spheres of air, water and fire, by the seven heavens, encompassed by the signs of the zodiac, by the ninth heaven, the 'Primum Mobile,' and the Empyrean, filled by the nine orders of angels, the whole at once revolving and reposing within the "everlasting arms" of infinity; while below, to the right and left, the attendant figures of S. Augustine and S. Thomas Aquinas exhibit their memorial texts to the passer by. A noble sonnet, now almost obliterated, but preserved by Vasari, is inscribed under this grand fresco.†

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* *Ciampi, &c.*, pp. 150, 151.

† "Voi che avvisate questa dipintura
Di Dio pietoso, sommo Creatore,
Lo qual fe' tutte cose con amore
Pesate, numerate, ed in misura,
In nove gradi angelica natura
In ello empirio ciel pien di splendore,
Colui che non si muove ed è motore,
Ciascuna cosa fecie buona e pura;
Levate gli occhi del vostro intelletto,
Considerate quanto è ordinato
Lo Mondo Universale, e con affetto
Lodate lui che l'ha si ben creato.
Pensate di passare a tal diletto
Tra gli angeli, dove è ciascun beato.
Per questo Mondo si vede la gloria,
Lo basso, e il mezzo, e l'alto in questa storia."[n]

[n] "Ye who behold this image of our God,
Creator pitiful and best, who made

To this succeeds the Creation and the Fall of Adam and Eve, displaying the same faults of crowded and confused composition that we noticed in the frescoes of the life of S. Ranier attributed to Simon di Memmo, but quite different in the colouring, a ruddy brown, not unpleasing to the eye. The compositions are for the most part the old traditional ones of Byzantium. The group of Adam and Eve, in the foreground, subsequent to the expulsion from paradise, is very pleasing, and Pietro has attempted the naked throughout with boldness and occasional success; his figures and contours, like those of most painters of Semi-Byzantine descent or sympathies, are round and full, and resemble those of the Florentine Uccello. Yet it is, after all, but a poor performance, and the history of Cain and Abel, in the third compartment, is still worse; but the last, the Building of the Ark, has great merit; the attitudes of the workmen, and the curious and discontented looks of Noah's wife and her gossips, peering at their work between the ribs of the vessel, are excel-

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All things with love, weighed, numbered, meted out—
Nor only us, Angelic Natures too
In ninefold order, peopling yonder heaven
Empyrean, full of splendour—Yea, by Him,
Himself who moves not yet who moveth all,
Were all things made, pure and, as He is, good!
—Lift up your eyes, your intellect, and see
And feel, how great, how gloriously ordained
This Universal World—then with your hearts
Praise Him whose hand hath fashioned it so well.
Think too of joys to come, received among
The Angelic host, where every one is blest.
Such is the theme of this my pictured story,
The depth, mid height and summit of God's glory!"

lent. Noah's wife is represented as a sad scold in the ancient Mysteries; her determination not to embark without her female friends, the manœuvre by which she was introduced into the Ark, and the salute with which she repaid her husband's congratulations on her arrival, were standing jokes with our easily pleased ancestors.*—The last of this series, the Coronation of the Virgin, painted in 1391, is almost obliterated.†

All these frescoes, except the Coronation, are attributed by Vasari to Buffalmacco, another proof of the intimate relations between the several Semi-Byzantine schools. Professor Rosini attributes the 'Dio Padre' to Taddeo di Bartolo,—it is worthy of him, or of Traini, a pupil of Orcagna, to whom I long felt inclined to ascribe it; but, though of merit widely unequal, the whole series have a family likeness,—they all fall under the description of 'Hystoria Genesis,' and the evidence is clear that this 'Hystoria Genesis' was painted by Pietro.‡

* See e. g., the Mystery of 'Noah's Flood,' in Mr. Wright's 'Chester Plays,' pp. 48 sqq.—Noah's plaint has frequently been uttered since:—

"Lorde! that wemen be crabbed aye,
And non are meke I dare wele saye;
That is well seene by me to daye,
In wittnesse of you ichone.[a]
Good wiffe! let be all this beare[b]
That thou maiste[c] in this place heare;
For all they wene that thou arte maister,—
And soe thou arte, by Sante John!"

† These frescoes are engraved by Lasinio in the great work on the Campo Santo.

‡ Dr. E. Förster observes that these were the first real frescoes

[a] Each one. [b] Noise. [c] Makest.

His name disappears from the records in 1392, at the same time with that of Spinello, and probably on the like occasion of the civil discords consequent on the death of Pietro Gambacorti. It was not till 1469, nearly seventy years afterwards, that Pisa sufficiently recovered herself to resume the decoration of the Campo Santo. Benozzo Gozzoli, pupil of Fra Angelico, was then engaged to carry on the series commenced by Pietro di Puccio of Orvieto.

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executed in Tuscany, painted (that is to say) piece by piece on the wet plaster, in the manner practised by Raphael and Michael Angelo in the sixteenth century, and by Cornelius and his brother artists of the great German revival in the present,—those of Giotto, Gaddi and Orcagna being invariably executed on a dry ground in tempera. *Beiträge, &c.*, p. 127.—It appears to me however that the process alluded to by Dr. Förster is accurately described by Cennini, that devoted adherent to the traditions of Giotto and the Gaddi:—"Quando se' per ismaltare," (says he,) "spazza bene prima il muro, e bagnalo bene, chè non può essere troppo bagnato; e togli la calcina tua ben rimenata a cazzuola a cazzuola; e smalta prima una volta o due; tanto che vègna piano lo'ntonaco sopra il muro. Poi, quando vuoi lavorare, abbi prima a mente di fare questo smalto bene arricciato, e un poco rasposo. ...Togli della calcina predetta, ben rimenata con zappa o con cazzuola, per ordine che paja unguento. Poi considera in te medesimo quanto il dì puoi lavorare; chè quello che smalti ti conviene finire. Vero è che alcuna volta di verno, a tempo di umido, lavorando in muro di pietra, sostiene lo smalto fresco in nell' altro dì. Ma, se puo', non t' indugiare; perchè il lavorare in fresco, cioè di quel dì, è la più forte tempera e migliore, e'l più dilettevole lavorare che si faccia," &c. pp. 58-60. edit. *Tumbroni*.—I have the less right to suggest this amendment to Förster's criticism, since (as already mentioned) I have myself, for convenience-sake, used the word 'fresco' throughout these 'Sketches' in the broad indifferent sense of the German 'wandgemälde' or 'wall-paintings,'—implying by it all ancient paintings, not executed in oils, tempera or miniature.

SECTION 4.—*Taddeo di Bartolo, and his School.*

AND now, like a grove of palm-trees after a long day's march through the desert, we reach the honoured name of Taddeo di Bartolo, and may expatiate and disport ourselves under his towering fame and far-stretching influence. He is one of the most interesting of the early painters, not merely in consideration of the beauty and feeling of his surviving works, but of the influence he exercised on the taste and the practice of the great Christian painters of the fifteenth century, the antagonists of the Cinquecento. He was the first, perhaps, who attempted to combine the unearthly, abstract, mystical beauty of the Madonnas of Ugolino, Lippo Dalmasio, and other Semi-Byzantine painters, with the principle and practice that characterised the succession of Niccola Pisano. Duccio and, it is said, Ugolino, seem to have been his early models, but he afterwards studied Ambrogio in preference, always however preserving his independence inviolate. With the rival succession of Mino and Simon di Memmo, still in a very depressed state, he had but little sympathy.

His early years seem to have been spent abroad, —we might have guessed as much, independently of the evidence that the locality of his works affords of it. Where an established taste exists, however inferior in quality, genius finds it difficult to rise unless by compromising its originality,—the artist whose name survives his century, seldom receives honour among

his own countrymen till prejudice has been dissipated by the noonday blaze of a reputation acquired among strangers. This is not so much a fault as the undue excess of a virtue—that reverence, namely, with which men cling even to the shadow of what has once commanded their love and admiration. Once, however, convinced of blindness and neglect, communities are seldom slow in acknowledging their error, and this was eventually the experience of Taddeo. Finding, in the meanwhile, Andrea di Vanni, Fra Martino di Bartolommeo, &c. in full possession of public favour, he sought for employment in the neighbouring towns of Tuscany, and worked for several years at S. Gimignano, Monte Oliveto, Volterra, Pisa,* and Perugia, at which latter city he painted the whole life of S. Catherine, in fresco, in the church of S. Domenico—paintings, I grieve to say, no longer existing, as there is reason to believe that they exerted the most inspiring influence on the schools of Umbria. Their loss is but slightly atoned for by the preservation of the Descent of the Holy Ghost, dated 1403, in S. Agostino.

These however were but preludes, and in due time an opportunity presented itself of uplifting his voice in a loftier strain and in his native town, Siena. In 1406 — the year, it may be remarked, when the decoration of the Sala della Balia was commenced by Fra Martino, the predecessor of Spinello—the

* A Madonna and Saints, dated 1395, and either now or lately in the sacristy of S. Chiara at Pisa, has been engraved by Rosini, tav. 29.

Signori and the Podestà found a considerable surplus in hand on balancing their accounts; they determined to expend a part of this sum in painting the chapel of the Palazzo Pubblico in fresco; a decree was passed, commissioning Taddeo in the most liberal manner to adorn it with whatever "figures, ornaments, gold and other devices should seem expedient to him, for the ornament of the said chapel and the honour of our republic,"—the remuneration to be adjusted at the conclusion of the work by the award of two 'Maestri,' or master-painters, one to be appointed by themselves and the other by Taddeo.* He commenced forthwith, and finished the body of the chapel in 1407, and the vestibule and pillars in 1413 and 1414, as proved by ancient records still extant and by his own contemporary inscription,†—although it is difficult to account for the lapse of time intervening between the commencement and the conclusion.

This chapel is still in excellent preservation. It lies parallel to the Sala del Consiglio, and is lighted merely by three windows, pierced in the intervening wall,—this renders it unfortunately very dark; it is separated by a grating from a vestibule, or passage, which traverses its entrance at right angles, commu-

* This decree, dated the 25th August, is printed by Dr. Gaye in his 'Carteggio degli Artisti,' tom. ii, p. 434.—A supplementary resolution was passed, 30 June 1407, "quod Magister Taddeus pictor possit in capellâ super altare destruere picturas Coronatæ ibi existentes, et ibi novas pingere picturas, ut sibi melius videbitur convenire." *Ibid.* p. 435.

† See *Von Rumohr, Ital. Forschungen*, tom. ii, p. 219.

nicating at one extremity with the Sala del Consiglio, at the other with that of the Concistoro. Both vestibule and chapel are painted by Taddeo, the former in a style peculiarly characteristic of Siena, originating in pride in the purity of her supposed Roman descent, and in her Ghibelline veneration for the Holy Roman Empire.

The series begins on the suffit of the arch of entrance from the Sala del Consiglio, with a bird's eye view of Rome, curious but extremely rude; full-length figures of Jupiter, Mars, Pallas and Apollo face each other on the opposite sides below it,—and, lowest of all, appear to the right and left, Aristotle on one side, seated *in cathedrâ*, and Julius Cæsar and Pompey, standing, on the other. Cicero, Cato and Scipio Nasica, Marcus Curius Dentatus, Camillus and Scipio Africanus, stand in triads on the wall of the vestibule opposite the chapel, with a rhythmical inscription between them, exhorting the rulers of Siena to study the public weal after the example of those heroes, and avoid the discords and disunion by which the Romans, the "gran popol di Marte," lost their liberty.* Lælius and the younger

* Thus given by Dellavalle from the MSS. of Pecci, *L. Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 190:—

"Specchiatevi in costor, voi che reggete!
Se volete regniare mille et mille anni;
Seguite il ben comune e non v' inganni,
Se alcuna passione in voi avete.
Dritti consegli come quei rendete
Che qui di sotto sono con longhi panni
Giusti col arme ne' comuni affanni
Come questi altri che quaggiù vedete,
Sempre maggiori sarete

Brutus figure on the pilasters opposite, and the four Cardinal Virtues are represented in the lunettes beneath the vault, each with an inscription commending her to the allegiance of Siena,—the whole forming a sort of summary of historical experience and natural or moral theology, as introductory to Revelation, with which it is linked by the allegorical figure of Religion, over the door leading into the great Council-hall, inscribed, "Whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of Jesus Christ," and by the gigantic figure of S. Christopher, carrying the infant Saviour on his shoulders, over that which opens into the Hall of the Consistory. These paintings are inferior in execution,—Scipio, Camillus, &c., look very unlike Roman heroes in their costumes of the fourteenth century; but their moral purpose and significance deserve praise, and there is every appear-

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Insieme uniti, e saglirete
Al Cielo pieno d' ogni gloria,
Si come fece il gran popolo di Marte,
El quale avendo del mondo victoria,
Perchè infra loro si furo dentro partiti
Perdè la libertate in ogni parte." [a]

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[a] "Mirror yourselves in these, ye who bear rule!
An' ye would reign thousand and thousand years;
Ensue the public good, nor be deceived
By Passion's whisper, tempting ye within.
Render just counsels like these men of old
Here limned beneath in robes of peacefulness,
Though skilled in arms when common cause required,—
And, like those other above, still shall ye be
Greater, the closer knit in union:
Strong in such union, ye shall scale high heaven
And bind your brows with glory, as did of yore
The mighty people of Mars—but who, albeit
Lords of the earth by vict'ry, 'mong themselves
Divided once, lost freedom and were not."

ance of their having suggested to Perugino the similar decorations of the 'Sala del Cambio' at Perugia.

Entering the chapel, you will have little difficulty in comprehending the arrangement of the frescoes, but few of them will detain your eye from the four large compartments opposite the windows, representing the concluding incidents in the history of the Virgin; in the first, she takes leave of the Apostles, gathered round her deathbed, more especially of the beloved S. John, who kneels at her feet; in the second, she expires, Our Saviour receiving her soul as a child in his arms, the old traditional composition of Byzantium,—two angels stand at the head, two at the foot of the bed, and the Apostles are gathered weeping around; in the third, they carry her body to the grave, S. John, with the palm-branch, leading the procession as chief mourner; in the last, she rises from the tomb at the summons of her son, who takes her by the hand, cherubs buoying her upwards, while the Apostles, unconscious of the divine presence, gaze wondering into the empty sepulchre,—Jerusalem is seen in the distance, bristling with towers like the towns of Italy in the middle ages.

Nothing can be more exquisite in their way than these four frescoes; they have not perhaps the comparatively correct design, or the grace and the freedom of motion of Simon di Memmo, but the composition is rich, varied and original; the heads are beautiful, more especially those of the Virgin and of Our Saviour, which are full of tenderness and sweetness; the drapery is peculiarly free and noble, the

architectural decoration admirable for the time, while the deepest and purest feeling animates the whole series; their resemblance to the works of Fra Angelico is most striking, not less in their religious expression than in the somewhat stunted proportion of the human figure, their principal blemish, and in the style of colouring, in which azure predominates, though with a tinge of brownish red. The Madonna by Pietro di Lorenzo at Florence, dated 1340, is the earliest Sienese picture in which I have observed this cerulean hue so strongly prominent;* a tendency to it, however, exists through the whole family of Semi-Byzantine painters.

I may mention, in addition to the above, the Annunciation over the altar, but it is scarcely visible through the gloom. The altar-piece in tempera has long been removed and broken up; the detached fragments in the gallery of the Academy probably belonged to it.

Taddeo died at the premature age of fifty-nine, a martyr to disease; he worked but little during his latter years, devoting his hours of comparative freedom from suffering to the instruction of his nephew, Domenico. His name does not occur in the list of painters living in 1428, and appended to the statutes of the Company,† and in all probability he was then no more.

Taddeo's influence on art, in its fullest sense, can

* Perhaps it would be found so too in the great altar-piece of Duccio, now almost black with dirt and neglect.

† See the *Lettere Sanesi*, tom. i, p. 160.

only be appreciated after an analysis of the obligations of the great masters of the fifteenth century to their several predecessors; but even in a more restricted point of view, it was more extensive than that of almost any Sienese artist. Fra Angelico unquestionably imitated his manner and drank deeply of his spirit, and his works at Perugia seem to have been a source of continual inspiration to the artists of Umbria, of the generation preceding Perugino. We see this in the frescoes of Martinello, on the outside of the little chapel of S. Catherine, belonging to the 'Confreria di S. Giacomo,' at Assisi, dated 1422—in the works of Pietro di Domenico di Pietro, of Monte-pulciano, who in a Madonna adoring the infant Saviour lying on her knees, now in Scotland, has invested a composition peculiar to modern Italy with the pale star-like transparency and sweetness of the Semi-Byzantines,*—and, to omit many others, in those of Niccolò di Foligno, who flourished from the middle to the close of the fifteenth century.†

* This picture is now in the collection of Colonel Lindsay, of Balcarres, Fifeshire. A Nativity in the Academy at Siena, and a small Madonna in the choir of the Camaldolesi at Naples, dated 1420, and in which Rosini (tom. iii, p. 25) discerns a resemblance to Simon di Memmo, are the only other known works of Domenico. In the picture noticed in the text, a S. Sebastian and a S. Jerome in the background have some resemblance to the early works of the Venetian Bellini.

† The influence of Taddeo is perceptible also in a painting by the father of Niccolò, Bartolommo di Tomaso, of Foligno, dated 1430, and engraved by Rosini, tom. iii, p. 34.—To the same school belongs Cristofano di Francesco, surnamed Sassetta, author of a very remarkable allegorical painting of S. Francis,

At Siena, however, it was different; on the one hand able representatives of Simon di Memmo and of the brothers 'di Lorenzo' were emerging from obscurity, on the other the young Domenico, his nephew, a youth of most amiable, modest and courteous disposition,* betrayed ere long an inveterate propensity to the dramatic. His early works bear a strong impress of Taddeo's style and a correspondent resemblance to Fra Angelico; the Assumption in the royal gallery at Berlin is an instance of this, as well as (unless I err in attributing it to him) the enormous altar-piece in the church of S. Domenico at Cortona, presented to the convent by Cosmo and Lorenzo de' Medici in 1438, and ascribed to Fra Angelico by Vasari.† But whether through the

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the "patriarcha pauperum," standing within a vesica piscis, on the sea, upon the body of a prostrate warrior—his arms extended like a cross, while above him float three angels recognizable by their emblems as the three ascetic virtues, Obedience, Poverty, and Chastity. This painting is signed, and dated 1444. I regret that I only know it by the engraving given by Rosini, tav. 50. —The anonymous picture in the collection of Count Demidoff, representing the Apparition of the three maidens to S. Francis near S. Quirico, would appear from the engraving (*Rosini*, tav. 25) to be by the same artist,—as the peculiar form of the upper part of the frame seems also to intimate.

* *Vasari.*

† This picture (now in the choir of S. Domenico) has the appearance of an immense painted organ-case, inelegant and unwieldy; it is divided into three large compartments, each with its corresponding gradino,—surmounted by three smaller ones—and flanked by semi-octagonal columns, each containing twelve Saints, and shooting into Gothic minarets; the large central compartment represents the Coronation of the Virgin, those to the right and left ten Saints, in companies of five each

influence of Gentile da Fabriano or the Florentines, Domenico seems by a very rapid transition of feeling to have thrown himself into the arms of the Cinquecento,* and in the frescoes of the Pellegrinajo,

—the three compartments of the gradino, the Flagellation of S. Andrew, the Adoration of the Kings and the Death of the Virgin—the three upper compartments, the old Byzantine composition of the Trinity in the middle, with the Annunciation to the right and left. On the basement, lowest of all, is inscribed "Chosimo e Lorenzo di Medici da Firenze anno data chuestra tavola a frati di Sco Domenico del Oss'vanza da Chortona per l' anima loro e di loro passati, MCCCCXXXX."[a] But the picture was finished above a year sooner, as appears from the letter of thanks from the Priori of Cortona to Cosmo de' Medici, dated 26 Dec. 1438, and printed in Dr. Gaye's 'Carteggio,' tom. i, p. 140,—in which it is described as "la tavvola ricca, la quale avete donata alla chiesa nuova di S. Domenico."—At first sight, from its general resemblance to the style of Fra Angelico, the friend of Cosmo de' Medici, and who actually resided and painted in the convent, it is natural to ascribe it to *him*; but, on looking more closely into its details with the help of a ladder, the types appear to be inferior to his, the feeling less profound, the colouring darker, and the attitude and character especially of the Virgin much more Sienese. These latter objections equally discredit the possibility of its being by one 'Andreas de Florentiâ,' evidently a pupil of Fra Angelico, and the painter of a picture, dated 1437, in a neglected chapel outside the convent of S. Margaret, also at Cortona.—In this state of uncertainty therefore, and Taddeo being either dead or *hors de combat* long before 1438, Domenico may advance a plausible claim to the honour of painting this picture. The question is an interesting one, less indeed on account of its intrinsic merit than on its character as a link between Taddeo and Fra Angelico.

* In 1439 he executed the frescoes of the sacristy of the

[a] The Lorenzo de' Medici here mentioned was the younger brother of Cosmo, and ancestor of the second great branch of the Medici, which succeeded to the sovereignty of Tuscany in the person of Cosmo I., on the extinction of the elder line in 1537.

or Infermeria, of the great Hospital of Siena, scarcely a trace of his early manner is perceptible. They were executed between 1440 and 1445, and represent in a series of large compartments, the Attendance upon the sick,—the Distribution of loaves and food,—the Foundling department, full of pleasing groups and figures, representing the baptism, nursing, sports, education and marriage of orphan girls,—Pope Celestine's concession of privileges to the Hospital,—and the erection of the Building. There is much merit in them, much observation of nature and truth of character, but little dignity or beauty; they are full of accessary figures in the costume of the time, but ill distributed, crowding and embarrassing the composition; they are remarkably free from stiffness,—but there is scarcely a trace of the deep feeling of Taddeo, and the tendency is decidedly to the theatrical taste of later times. The backgrounds are architectural, and in the concluding compartments especially, very good.

Various artists, M. Pietro di Giovanni Pucci and his two sons, M. Priamo and Lorenzo (the latter more celebrated as a sculptor under the name of Vecchietta) and others—worked along with Domenico in this great undertaking,* but the style was apparently uncongenial to Siena and found few or no

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Duomo, subsequently destroyed by fire; they were four in number, representing the history of four martyrs; for the three first he received 404 lire, for the last 240. *L. Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 197.

* See the *Lettere Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 197.

imitators; Domenico left no direct succession, and his assistants either dropped into oblivion, or restricted themselves to the devotional and conventional style of their more celebrated contemporaries, —always however retaining a peculiar colouring, a mixture of white and of bluish or iron grey, blotchy and very disagreeable in effect, in virtue of their descent from Taddeo di Bartolo and Ugolino.* It was not, in short, till the beginning of the sixteenth century, nearly sixty years after these frescoes were completed, that they exerted any influence on art, when Pinturicchio and his coadjutor, the youthful Raphael, disdained not to study the horses and costumes of Domenico, while working together in the 'Libreria' of the Cathedral.†

* The most remarkable of these were Vecchietta, named in the text, his friend Francesco di Giorgio, and Neroccio.—Of Vecchietta, there is a picture, dated 1457, in the gallery of the Uffizj at Florence, a Madonna and Child, attended by Saints; the Virgin's head is sweet,—the child, blessing, and the attendant Saints, are full of dignity, but the colouring is singularly cold and unpleasant. As a sculptor this artist bears a well-merited reputation, but he attached far higher importance to his character as a painter, always signing himself 'pictor,' even on his magnificent bronze ciborium, erected in the Duomo in 1472. Pictures by Francesco di Giorgio, one of the best architects of the early Cinquecento, and employed as such by Pope Pius II. in building the Cathedral at Pienza, and by Frederick II., Duke of Urbino, on his palace in that city, and others by Neroccio, all singularly weak and disagreeable, may be seen in the gallery of the Academy at Siena. Perhaps the peculiar colouring and style of Bonfigli of Perugia, a painter mediocre in execution, but of a certain originality, and said to have been a master of Perugino, may have been derived remotely from Taddeo di Bartolo.

† *Lanzi, Sienese School, Epoch I.*

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The whole career of Taddeo and Domenico—important as it is in the history of Italian art at large—is a mere episode, though a most interesting one, in that of the Sienese school.

SECTION 5.—*Giovanni di Paolo, Sano di Pietro, Matteo da Gualdo and Matteo di Giovanni.*

I RESUME the thread, accordingly, of the succession of Mino and Duccio, of Simon di Memmo and the brothers Pietro and Ambrogio, the representatives of the two distinct styles in which Siena seems to have found the peculiar voice and expression of her feelings so long as she retained her moral and political independence,—the one expressive of her share in the common movement of the age, and leaning by a natural sympathy towards Florence and the Cinquecento, and yet hesitating, and latterly at least, distrustful of its tendency, the other peculiar to her as a Ghibelline city, and looking wistfully back to Byzantium. Both these styles, the elder and the younger, came once more into juxtaposition and antagonism during the second quarter of the fifteenth century, after the influence of Taddeo had passed away, and his nephew Domenico had seceded from his principles. Giovanni di Paolo and Sano di Pietro* held at that time, in their degree,

* Both are inscribed, though as yet without the title of Maestro, in the list of painters flourishing in 1428, *Lett. Sanesi*, tom. i, p. 160. The name of Paolo di Maestro Neri, father of Giovanni, occurs in the earliest list appended to the statutes,

nearly the same position relatively to contemporary artists that the sons of Lorenzo and Simon di Memmo had occupied a hundred years before them. Their best works, indeed, have perished, but enough remains to justify the reputation they enjoyed among their brethren.

Of Giovanni, the best existing specimen is a small picture of the Last Judgment in the Academy at Siena, long attributed to Ambrogio, so strong is the resemblance in style between them. The composition is the old Byzantine one, unsurpassable for solemn grandeur and sublimity. The Saviour's head is the youthful one of the primitive Church, as seen in the Catacombs of Rome, the 'Dalmatica di S. Leone,' and long afterwards, in the Sistine Chapel; the body is almost naked, the attitude nearly that of Orcagna, Fra Angelico and Michael Angelo in their respective compositions. The Apostles, the Virgin and S. John the Baptist attend to the right and left, the two latter kneeling; the angels blow the trumpets below Our Saviour, and underneath, our common mother, Eve, is seated, leaning mournfully on her arm. The angels are busy parting the wicked and the good; one of them, as in the fresco of Orcagna at Pisa, leads a secular youth, doubtful of his claim to happiness, to the company on the Saviour's right hand; another compels a woman who had ranged herself among the blest, towards the yawning gulf on

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apparently about the middle of the fourteenth century. Sano is usually, but erroneously, described as the son of Pietro di Lorenzolie; may have been his descendant.

the left. The Inferno is much in the usual style, but a sweetness and tenderness of feeling akin to Fra Angelico reveals itself in the Paradise; it is full of recognitions of dear friends of earth, meeting—to part, to misunderstand each other no more—throughout an eternity of confidence and love; here two young friends, early separated, cling round each others' necks,—there an old monk welcomes the pupils he had trained in letters, and that had died, seemingly, under his tutelage; here an aged ecclesiastic greets his Abbess sister,—there a young Saint, with his coronal of glory, salutes a venerable Bishop without one, but who had been his guide to perfection. And lastly, the little Innocents of Bethlehem, with their shining wounds, mingle everywhere with the throng, linking the Judgment-seat with the Manger and the Cave of the Nativity. The scene is a green and sunny Eden, full of flowers and fruit-trees.*

This painting bears at once the strongest resemblance—in composition and style of thought to Fra Angelico—in colouring and the general air of the figures, to the little picture of the Fathers of the Desert by Pietro di Lorenzo, although much less highly finished. But its peculiar character lies in

* Giovanni excelled, says Ugurgieri, "nel ritrarre l' herbe ed i frutti, ed in piccolo più che grande, e faceva le figure di buon disegno, ed assai ben disposte e vestite, e coloriva con gran diligenza e grazia, ed in quel tempo più piaceva ed era il migliore." *Lett. Sanesi*, tom. iii, p. 50.—Dellavalle has not noticed him except incidentally under the head of Matteo di Giovanni, his son.

the combination of the deep primitive feeling of the Semi-Byzantine schools with the contemporary improvement reflected from Sculpture, and which shewed itself in nothing more than the success and love with which it depicted childhood; Giacomo della Quercia and Antonio di Federigo, his successor at least, if not his pupil, at Siena, were probably the models of Giovanni and his contemporaries at this period.

The picture in question was probably painted in 1445, as the predella to a larger altarpiece.*

Giovanni's later works are much less pleasing; he was the last of his race—the spirit of the Cinquecento gained ground daily; the devotional feelings which inspired the elder succession were dying away in the larger and taking refuge in the smaller towns of Tuscany and Umbria—his very son became a convert to the ascendant influence; with his heart chilled and his fingers frozen in this ungenial atmosphere, he painted in a style harder and more rigid year by year till removed by death from a scene which he had ceased either to enjoy or adorn. His last works seem to have been in 1462, when invited, in conjunction with Sano di Pietro and his son Matteo, to work for the new Cathedral built at Pienza by Pius II. He is supposed to have died shortly afterwards.

* To the Madonna, apparently, of that date, extant in Ugurgieri's time in the church of S. Domenico. Dellavalle sought for it in vain, he says,—but he was familiar with and has described the Judgment (*Lett. Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 223) as a work of Ambrogio.

Sano's genius, and the succession to which he belonged, were much more in sympathy with the age. I cannot trace his descent, link by link, from the line of Mino, but nothing is more clear than that he belonged to it. His celebrated fresco, the Coronation of the Virgin, over the Porta Romana, is now scarcely visible,* but a repetition of the same subject (his especial favourite) in the inner hall of the Bicherna,† is a beautiful composition, and if the individual heads are less exquisitely spiritual than in some of the earlier productions of the school, they are full of earnestness and feeling. This fresco was executed in 1445, the same year as the Last Judgment of Giovanni di Paolo; a beautiful sonnet—half praise, half prayer to the Virgin—was found inscribed beneath it, when a screen which concealed it was removed in the last century.‡ The angels in

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* Dellavalle speaks of it with rapture; the style resembles that of Simon di Memmo, the composition was excellent, the individual figures (especially the S. Cecilia) full of beauty,—love, joy and rapture beamed on every countenance. *L. Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 229.—According to Ferri's 'Guida di Siena,' it was begun in 1453 by Stefano Sassetti, and finished after his death by Sano in 1459, for which he received 1200 lire.

† A department of the Palazzo Pubblico.

‡ It is given by Dellavalle as follows, *L. Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 230.

"Quest' alma gloriosa Vergin pura,
Figliuola del suo figlio, sposa e madre,
Perchè l' Eterno Padre
La trovò umil più ch' altra persona,
Del Universo qui le da corona!
Vergine Madre del Eterno Dio,
Dalle chui sante mani coronata,
Sieti raccomandata

this, and in Sano's easel-paintings, though less delicate and etherial, foreshadow those of the Umbrian school,—in one of his paintings, a Madonna and Saints, in the Academy, there is even a resemblance, in its inferiority, to Fra Angelico. His colouring, however, invariably preserves the greenish yellow tinge, common to the succession of Mino.

This too is apparent in the works of Matteo da Gualdo, an artist of Umbria, but wholly Sienese in style and feeling, with a decided leaning to the manner of Sano in preference to that of Giovanni di Paolo, or his predecessor in influence, Taddeo di Bartolo. The little chapel of S. Catherine (already mentioned) at Assisi, is nearly covered with his frescoes, of which the Doctors of the Church on the ceiling, the Virgin and Child, adored by little naked angels, over the door, and the two compartments on the left-hand wall, representing S. Antony, attended by his monks, blessing camels on their knees, and

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La divota e fedel città di Siena,
Come 'n te spera: Ave di gratia plena."[a]

This fresco was painted over another, representing the same subject, by Maestro Lippo, dated 1352, (*L. Sanesi, loc. cit.*) and for which payments in 1347 (*L. Sanesi*, tom. ii, p. 111,) and in 1351, (*Ital. Forsch.* tom. ii, p. 119,) occur in the records.

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[a] "Gracious and glorious, lo! the Virgin pure,
Daughter, and Spouse, and Mother of her Son;
Whom—for the Eternal Father found her meek
And humble more than others in his sight—
He crowneth here Queen of the Universe!
—Virginal Mother of the Eternal God,
Crowned by the Holiest! oh, entreated be
For thy Siena, loyal and devout!
She trusts in thee—Mother of Mercy, hail!

giving alms to the poor, are perhaps the best. The infant angels are evidently imitated from the sculptures of Giacomo della Quercia; the outlines are very hard, resembling the early attempts of Luca Signorelli, but you see the germ of the types of Umbria, and there is a gay, cheerful, smiling character in the colouring and conception throughout, which, taken along with their perfect preservation, leaves a most pleasing impression on the memory.— I should mention the landscape, which is not without merit, but very innocent and naive, a mixture of the style of Ambrogio and Simon di Memmo with that of the contemporary school of Squarcione at Padua. These frescoes are dated 1468, and the fact that the concluding compartment of the series was painted by another and an inferior hand*, would appear to prove that Matteo died while engaged on the work.

Nearly akin in manner to this artist, but as much superior to him as he was himself inferior to Sano and the still elder representatives of Pietro and Ambrogio, was Matteo di Giovanni, the son of Giovanni di Paolo. His early pictures are hard and dry, like the later ones of his father, but he gradually leant more and more to the side of Sano and his namesake of Gualdo. In 1462 he worked at Pienza, in 1468 at Naples, where he is said to have exerted

* That of Pier Antonio Mesastri of Foligno. It represents the resuscitation of the cock and hen in the memorable legend of S. James of Compostella; the fresco immediately preceding it, by Matteo, represents the miraculous preservation of the youth in whose favour the miracle was worked.

great influence on the development of Zingaro, the glory of the early Neapolitan school; his Slaughter of the Innocents in S. Catherine a Formello, dated that year, though stiff and hard, has much merit, and proves his thorough adoption, in all its details, of the new Cinquecento style; his design of the Liberation of Bethulia, as inlaid in the pavement of the Duomo at Siena four years afterwards, is much superior and very spirited; and in his picture of S. Barbara at S. Domenico, painted in 1478, he rises to his highest point of excellence,—grace and sweet feeling atoning for types not of the most spiritual or dignified character, and for a monotony of colouring which is wearisome after the freshness and transparency of Sano and Matteo da Gualdo. But subsequently to this year, or shortly at least after it, we are sensible, if I mistake not, of a gradual decadence in his career. The traditional outlines of composition, so calm and symmetrical, still preserved in the altarpieces of the day, although the ideal beauty of the types and the devotional expression of the features had passed away, gradually became more and more distasteful to him; his delight was in the distortions of passion rather than the calm ecstacy of contemplation, in the delineation of bones and muscles rather than the radiance of the soul on the countenance,—hence a predilection for dramatic composition, which his fancy was unfortunately insufficient to redeem from monotony by variety and incident,—the Massacre of the Innocents, originally painted at Naples, became his stock subject; he repeated it

again and again—in 1481 as a design for the pavement of the Duomo, the year after as an altar-piece for S. Agostino, (one of his best works indeed in this latter style,) and once more, and for the last time, in 1491, for the church of the Concezione—a painting in which mannerism reigns supreme, design and expression are alike caricatured, and the composition is mere confusion. This seems to have been his last picture; the devil of design, whom he had rashly evoked, mastered and slew him as a painter, and whether he survived later as a man, is a matter of comparative indifference.*

Matteo was the last, strictly speaking, of the Sienese school—the last native artist lineally descended in the direct line of succession, from Mino and Duccio, the fathers of the race—the last painter, worthy of the name, who derived his composition, his types, his colouring, his principles and his prejudices—much as he may have modified or corrupted them by foreign imitation—still, originally and primarily, from the traditions of Siena, exclusively of any other school. With him therefore the line of

* An Annunciation in fresco, a very pleasing painting, dated 1482, in the baptistery of the Pieve at S. Gimignano, may perhaps be attributable to Matteo. Lanzi remarks that "it was his custom to introduce in his pictures some episode unconnected with the principal story in small figures, a style in which he excelled." This may be observed too in some of the works of Perugino and Pinturicchio, and of Don Bartolommeo della Gatta, all of them Umbrian artists,—and also in the paintings of the Flemish school of Van Eyck, from which they may have originally imitated it.

continuity breaks abruptly off. Luca Signorelli, indeed, was at one time his pupil, resembles him in his early paintings,* and to the last retained a tinge of his colouring; so far therefore he may not incorrectly be styled the heir of the succession,—but he is far too original and independent, and profited by foreign influences far too materially to be classed under it,—the stream that descended from the Pulpit of Niccola Pisano, when struck by the rod of Mino, had dwindled to a tiny rivulet, barely perceptible when it flowed into the river of his genius,—it thence flowed into the ocean of Michael Angelo's.

It is long however ere the last leaf falls from the oak-tree. Contemporary with Pinturicchio, Peruzzi, Razzi, Mecherino—representatives severally of the new foreign styles introduced by the sixteenth century, and that had established themselves at Siena even before the death of Matteo—a representative of the past long survived in Fungai, an artist in whose paintings, scattered through the city, traces of almost all the styles that had successively prevailed at Siena, from Guido downwards, may be seen blended in singular and most incongruous association. We lose sight of him after 1512, the date of the Coronation of the Virgin in the Carmine—the unvarying subject of his pencil.†

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* As in the Nativity in S. Domenico at Siena, and the altar-piece of the oratory of S. Onufrio at Perugia.

† There are paintings also by this artist in the church of Fonte Giusta, in the Academy, and elsewhere.

SECTION 6.—*Pavement of the Duomo.*

WE must not, however, bid adieu to Sienese art without paying our tribute of admiration to a department of it of unique and peculiar interest, the mosaic pavement in the Cathedral, mentioned in more than one of the preceding pages. The whole of this vast field, from the great Western door to the tribune behind the high altar, including both aisles of the nave, both arms of the cross, and the space that surrounds the choir, is decorated by a series of designs, historical and symbolical, cut in outline by the chisel, and filled up with black pitch or particoloured marble, presenting very much the appearance, in large, of the 'Illustrations' of Dante, Æschylus, &c. by Flaxman. The subjects are full of fancy and poetry, and admirably chosen with reference to the localities, and all are designed and executed by artists of Siena.

The series commences on the platform outside the Western façade, with a representation of the Pharisee and Publican respectively praying towards the temple. Immediately within, beyond the central door, you are greeted by Hermes Trismegistus, high-priest of mysticism, attended by a male and a female figure, personifications of Paganism and Christianity; he presents to the former the Poemander, a treatise of the later Platonism, then erroneously attributed to him; on his other hand are two griffins, emblematical of the divine and human nature of Our Saviour. The Sibyls, who foretold the coming of Christ, are

represented in the two aisles; and in the central nave, beyond the Hermes, advancing towards the high altar, are depicted, in successive circles and compartments, Siena with her sister towns of Tuscany, symbolised by their respective animals*—the spread eagle, figurative of the supremacy of the Holy Roman Empire—the Hill of Virtue—and the Wheel of Fortune, this last at the termination of the nave,—while the space below the cupola is occupied by the history of Elijah in various compartments,† and further still, Moses receives the tables of the Law on Mount Sinai, and David harps before the Sanctuary.

In the North transept are represented the Expulsion of Herod Antipas, the Massacre of the Innocents, the Liberation of Bethulia, and the battle of Joshua against the five kings of the Amorites,—in the Southern, the Seven Ages of Man, the battle of

* The wolf and twins, in the centre, signify Siena,—of the surrounding emblems, the lion represents Florence, the lynx Lucca, the hare Pisa, the unicorn Viterbo, the stork Perugia, the tower-crowned elephant Rome, the goose Orvieto, the horse Arezzo, another lion Massa, the goat Grosseto, the vulture Volterra, and the dragon Pistoja. Most of these emblems may be seen also on the façade of the Duomo.

† As follows:—1 and 2, (small ones,) Elijah asking food of the widow of Zarephath, and Raising her son; 3, 4, 5, and 6, (to the right and left of the larger central compartments,) Elijah in the wilderness, his Interview with Obadiah, Ahab and Obadiah coming to meet him, and Elijah's commission to the youth to anoint Jehu king over Israel; 7, 8, 9, and 10, (in the centre, largest of all,) the Meeting of Ahab and Elijah, the Sacrifice of Ahab, the Sacrifice of Elijah, and the slaughter of the prophets of Baal at the brook Kishon.

Jephtha against the Ammonites, the Death of Absolom,* and Samson slaying the Philistines—figurative, all, of the trials and victories of the Church Militant. The space around the sanctuary is guarded by the four Cardinal Virtues,† and within it, in the centre of that Holy of Holies, is depicted Abraham's sacrifice, the type of the great atonement on Mount Calvary, surrounded by a border of small compartments, representing Adam and Eve praying for forgiveness, Abel and Cain sacrificing, Melchizedek kneeling before the bread and wine, Elisha raising the widow's son, Tobias with the angel, and the three Theological Virtues, Faith, Hope, and Charity.

These compositions of the choir, the most important of the whole, as well as those of Moses on the Mount and the history of Elijah, are by Mecherino, and belong to the sixteenth century. But the others are all anterior to the close of the fifteenth, and the scheme of arrangement dates in all probability from the fourteenth—to which the Cardinal Virtues, the battle of Joshua, and the Samson slaying the Philistines, usually attributed to Duccio, unquestionably belong. I am far indeed from disbelieving the tradition which ascribes to him the in-

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* Very spirited, and reminding one of the frescoes of Spinello at Pisa; it is engraved in Rosini, tav. 28.

† Extremely well characterized—Justice, holding the globe in one hand, and extending the sword over it with the other, a noble figure—Fortitude, with her column—Prudence, with a serpent—Temperance, pouring hot water from one vessel into another.

vention of this novel and most beautiful style of decoration; the pavement has in more than one place been renewed at distant intervals,* and the designs of Mecherino may not improbably have replaced those of Duccio himself. Even Dante might be thought to allude to them in the twelfth book of the Purgatorio, more especially as at the close of the eleventh his thoughts had been dwelling at Siena.

Of all these compositions, the fullest perhaps of poetry and feeling is the series representing the Seven Ages of Life, in the Southern nave, near the 'Cappella del Voto,' executed in 1476 by the sculptor Antonio di Federigo. Nothing can be more simple and unpretending than their design and arrangement. Six small medallions, representing the same individual in the different stages of Infancy, Boyhood, Adolescence, (his path among flowers,) Youth, (with a falcon on his wrist, the grace of the figure remaining, but the innocent childish loveliness passed away,) Manhood, and Old Age—are ranged symmetrically around a central one, representing the last stage of all, Decrepitude, in which the old man, bowed down by the weight of years and sorrow, leans on his crutches and bends over an open grave.—I do not cite them as pre-eminently beautiful; though the figures are full of grace, there is little in them to

* The Wheel of Fortune, for instance, was originally sculptured in 1372. *Chronicle quoted in L. Sanesi*, tom. i, p. 188. —The earliest notices of the pavement discovered by Von Rumohr in the records are in 1447. *Ital. Forsch.* tom. ii, p. 7.

arrest the careless glance of the traveller; but pondered fittingly, they leave a deep and lasting impression on the heart.

And now, with a few short words of recapitulation and comment, we must take a reluctant leave of Siena.

Reviewing the ground we have travelled over, the minds with whom we have held communion in their distinctive characteristics, and the general qualities common to the whole school, I think I may describe it as emphatically Feminine, in contrast to the more daring, hardy, masculine race of the Giotteschi—Feminine, that is to say, in all the grace, dignity, and holiness of the epithet. The majesty of Mino, the rich imagination, graceful composition, and gentle yet vigorous touch of Duccio, the fancy, feeling, and thought of Simon di Memmo, the delicacy and purity, the love for Nature, animate and inanimate, and the patriotic aspirations of Pietro and Ambrogio, the holy fervour of Taddeo, the sympathy with common life of his nephew Domenico, the tenderness of Giovanni di Paolo, the sweetness of Sano, the more common-place and homely, yet genuine merits of the two Matteos, and above all, the enthusiastic devotion and piety peculiar to the whole succession—justify the praise. All their sympathies and distastes support this distinction—their fondness for brooding over their own sweet fancies in the home of their hearts, in preference to ven-

turing forth into the world of action and disquiet, of cyclic or dramatic composition—their proneness to veil those very fancies in allegory and symbolism, and to pour the swelling but vague emotion from which they spring into the channel of the traditional compositions—the drooping bend of the neck in their Madonnas, so humble and so meek, and the caressing intercourse between the Mother and the Son, in which the Humanity and the Deity are brought temporarily into abeyance—their comparative inferiority in Design—their richer and more varied Colouring—their more spiritual and idealised Expression—their love for children, for flowers, for birds, for animals, for everything sweet and pure and fresh in creation—and lastly, the very concentration of the school, its limited reputation, as compared with the cosmopolism and far-spread fame of the Giotteschi, and its inability to change with the times, or to survive the extinction of faith and liberty —all witness to it alike.—And when we remember what the daughters of Siena were—when we think of the heroism shewn, not merely in the palmy days of Monte-Aperto,* but long after her star had declined to the horizon—during the siege, in the dying hour of the republic—when they arrayed themselves in companies, under Livia Fausta, Fausta Piccolomini, and Laodamia Forteguerra, and contributed their quota to the defence, sharing every privation, and

* When a Sienese lady named Usilia took thirty-six prisoners! *Lett. Sancsi*, tom. i, p. 227.

extorting from the French Marshal, Montluc, the emphatic declaration that he would rather undertake to defend Siena with her women than Rome with her men, such as the men of Rome then were—any objection to the epithet as one of weakness, timidity or insufficiency, must necessarily vanish.*

No school of art perhaps reflects national character so vividly as that of Siena, and certainly none of the many nations of Italy, if judged by its school, would

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* See Sismondi,—and for a most characteristic account of the siege, the amusing memoirs of M. de Montluc, who thus apostrophises the ladies of Siena:—"Il ne sera jamais, dames Sienoises! que je n' immortalize vostre nom tant que le livre de Montluc vivra; car à la verité vous estes dignes d'immortelle louange, si jamais femmes le furent. Au commencement de la belle resolution que ce peuple fit de deffendre sa liberté, toutes les dames de la ville de Siene se despartirent en trois bandes; la premiere estoit conduite par la Signora Forteguerra, qui estoit vestue de violet, et toutes celles qui la suivoient aussi, ayant son accoutrement en façon d'une Nymphe, court et monstrant le brodequin; la seconde estoit la Signora Picolhuomini, vestue de satin incarnadin, et sa trouppe de mesme livrée; la troisiesme estoit la Signora Livia Fausta, vestue toute de blanc, comme aussi estoit sa suitte avec son enseigne blanche. Dans leurs enseignes elles avoient de belles devises; je voudrois avoir donné beaucoup et m'en resouvenir. Ces trois escadrons estoient composez de trois mil dames, gentils-femmes ou bourgeoises; leurs armes estoient des pics, des pelles, des hottes et des facines; et en cest equipage firent leur monstre et allerent commencer les fortifications. Monsieur de Termes, qui m'en a souvent fait le comte, (car je n'y estois encor arrivé,) m'a asseuré n' avoir jamais veu de sa vie chose si belle che celle là; je vis leurs enseignes depuis. Elles avoient fait un chant à l'honneur de la France lorsqu'elles alloient à leur fortification: je voudrois avoir donné le meilleur cheval que j'aye et l'avoir pour le mettre icy."—*Ap. Petitot, Collection des Mémoires*, &c., tom. xxi, p. 249.

descend so favourably to posterity. Reverence for religion, piety at once ardent and habitual, would thus characterise her through the whole period of her greatness. In nothing is this more remarkable than in the language of her decrees in reference to public works of art, as contrasted with those of Florence—the latter magniloquent and haughty from an exalted sense of political greatness, the former sensitively alive doubtless to the honour of the republic, but referring all things in the first instance, humbly and reverently, to the glory of God.*

Correspondent to this is her solicitude for the personal character and respectability of her artists, and her liberality towards those she found deserving of her favour. In a remarkable decree, as late as 1438, respecting the election of an Architect of the Duomo after the death of Giacomo della Quercia, it is provided on the one hand that neither an usurer, gamester, contractor for illicit gain, or indulger in nameless vice, nor any one even suspected of such delinquencies, shall be eligible to the office,†—on

* I may cite as an example the exordium of a decree regarding the Cathedral, as late as 1456:—"Fu stabilito, conciosiacosache nissuna Signoria o Stato si può mantenere e governare senza l'ajuto de lo Onnipresente Dio et de la sua Madre Santissima, Advocata di questa nostra città, il quale ajuto non si può sperare nè degnamente implorare se non si volta la mente e gli occhi del cuore a esso Iddio e a la sua Santissima religione, e questo non si può fare, non avendo cura alli suoi santi templi e al culto divino, e maximamente alla nostra Chiesa principale, la quale è uno degli occhi, anzi è la corona, de la [città]," &c. &c. *Lett. Sanesi*, tom. i, p. 193.

† This of course throws a favourable light on the character of the sculptor Antonio di Federigo, who was appointed to the office.

the other, that the master on whom the choice may fall, shall, like his predecessors, be knighted by the state, to enhance his personal credit and the dignity of the office, and be pensioned for life—the annuity, in case of his death in the service of the republic, to be continued to his widow so long as she shall remain single, or till she enter any religious order.*

Nor less dignified was the sense entertained of their vocation by the painters of Siena, as evinced by the Statutes of their association, elsewhere alluded to,—nor less liberal the readiness with which they imparted instruction to all who sought for it, foreigners no less than natives. Siena was a common centre of influence to all the towns and communities of Contemplative rather than Dramatic tendency—of Ghibelline and Byzantine rather than Guelph and Giottesque sympathies—to all, if I may venture the surmise, in which the infusion of Teutonic was stronger than that of Roman blood, in the original

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* Printed in the 'Lettere Sanesi,' tom. i, p. 193.—The qualifications of an efficient Operajo are enumerated with amusing vehemence in a petition addressed, in 1298, "A voi, Signori Nove! regitori e governatori del Comune e del Popolo di Siena," after popular impatience had been aroused by the torpor of that functionary and other abuses,—"Perciò," they say, "per amor di cholui al qui [cui] honore e riverentia la decta opra si fa, cioè la Madre di Dio, siate pregati di ponarvi Operajo religioso, il quale sia continuo abitatore dessa opra, oltre omo che stia a la decta opra die e note..omo intero, che intenda solamente ai fatti dell' opra..chè avendo l' omo da intendare ai fatti della sua masarizia, chome di moglie e de figliuoli e ai fatti de la bottiga, &c. &c.,—però, per amore di Dio e de la Madre sua, vi sia racomandata l'opra, perochè grande honore a Comune se la va bene." *Ibid.* p. 190.

elements of their population. Natives of Pisa, Pistoja, Orvieto, Norcia, Perugia,* and of almost every town of Umbria, appear in the rolls of the Association—and not merely Italians; the resident German artists were so numerous as to possess a distinct chapel in the church of S. Domenico,†—and even Denmark seems to have had a representative among them in the fourteenth century.‡ So unjust is the imputation of exclusiveness and illiberality to the painters of Siena.§

But, although later in yielding to the influence of the Cinquecento and of reviving Paganism, Siena was not the less doomed eventually to succumb to it; a change passed over her spirit during the latter half of the fifteenth century; luxury and learning, hand in hand, Armidas in disguise, entered her

* Perugia indeed was an exception to this rule, so far as politics are concerned, hers having uniformly been Guelph. But this may be accounted for by the circumstances of her position with reference to Rome.

† *Lettere Sanesi*, tom. i, p. 139.

‡ 'Daniello di Lunardo, detto Danese.' In one of the rolls of the Company of Painters, written apparently immediately after 1395, *Lett. Sanesi*, tom. i, p. 160.

§ Lanzi, it appears to me, has misunderstood the spirit of the provisions he blames so much in the statutes of the Sienese painters. The florin of gold that each stranger artist was required to pay was merely the "dritto dell' arte," the price of his admission to the privilege of the craft; and the "buono e soficiente ricolta infino a la quantità di xxv lire," which he was called on to give, was an equally reasonable impost. It was not jealousy, but the abundance of native talent and the intimate sympathy of the Sienese with their school so long as it lasted, that occasioned the exclusion, not of foreigners but of foreign styles, previous to the close of the fifteenth century.

camp and seduced her chivalry;* and henceforth, and in a like proportion, we find love growing cold and the standard of morals, public and private, gradually sinking, till the school died out, and the spirit of liberty, after one last and noble effort, expired also. Piety and religious enthusiasm, long ere this, had taken refuge in Perugia and the sister towns of Umbria, inhabited by the Lombard population of the old Duchy of Spoleto, there to collect, and thence to exert their energies in a last, comprehensive, and successful, but transient effort to restore the dignity of Christian painting, and exalt her on the shield of the Cinquecento to her true rank as Queen of Art. Siena, though fallen from her first estate, and powerless effectually to promote this reformation, warmly sympathised with it, and it is interesting to observe, long after Mino and Duccio had been forgotten, the original innate predisposition still manifesting itself in the successive ultimate rejection of every foreign style, either of dramatic or irreligious tendency, which attempted to engross her patronage; the followers of Michael Angelo found least acceptance, those of Perugino, Raphael, and Baroccio most,—her last native artists, the Salimbeni

* In 1459, we find the ladies of Siena reciting Latin orations before the Emperor Frederick III. and his fair spouse, Leonora —and twenty years afterwards, the enactment of sumptuary laws against the "lusso delle donne,—e fu vietato loro il provvedersi di panni forestieri." *Lettere Sanesi*, tom. ii, pp. 46, 47.—By this time, it appears, the population had diminished to 2760 heads of families, so rapid had been the decadence since the plague.

and the Vanni, were all pupils of Umbria, and during the universal decadence of painting towards the close of the sixteenth century, more feeling and purity, and a livelier reminiscence of the better days of Christian art, are to be found in the altar-pieces of Siena than anywhere else in Italy.*

* I may add, on the authority of a charter of 1324, that the painters of Siena resided in a distinct quarter styled the 'Contrada Pictorum,' and which Dellavalle identifies with the street still called 'Via de' Maestri,' "che trovasi prima di giungere al prato di S. Agostino, e che va verso il Carmine."—It is healthy, he adds,—remote from dust and noise, "quale appunto si conviene agli artisti che vogliono raccoglimento e pace," and well lighted by the sun—"che non torce da essa mai i suoi raggi, ossia che spunti o che tramonti sopra il Cielo Sanese." *Lettere Sanesi*, tom. i, p. 163; ii, p. 13.

CHRISTIAN ART OF MODERN EUROPE.

PERIOD I.

ARCHITECTURE.

Development of the Christian Element, Spirit—Lombard and Gothic, or Pointed Architecture—Rise of Sculpture and Painting—Expression.

VI. SEMI-BYZANTINE SUCCESSION AT FLORENCE —ORCAGNA AND FRA ANGELICO—PREPARATION FOR VERROCCHIO AND PERUGINO.

SECT. 1. *Andrea Orcagna.*

SECT. 2. *Fra Angelico da Fiesole.*

LETTER VI.

SEMI-BYZANTINE SUCCESSION AT FLORENCE.

ORCAGNA AND FRA ANGELICO—PREPARATION FOR VERROCCHIO AND PERUGINO.

It must be fresh in your recollection that we postponed the Contemplative to the Dramatic painters of Tuscany, on the broad principle that Contemplation needs in the first instance the wings of Action to enable her to ascend into that airy crystalline where she may subtilize and refine.* Giotto, by his improvement in design and general technical merits, exerted a purifying and invigorating though occult influence on artists even of adverse schools, and who rivalled, if not surpassed him in depth of thought and spirituality of heart. We have, in the preceding letter, traced the history of the most celebrated of these schools, the Sienese; we will now attempt to do justice to the representatives of another, Orcagna and Fra Angelico—artists divided at first sight,

* *Vide supra*, tom. ii, p. 163.

apparently, by an impassable interval of character and date, yet intimately akin, linked to each other by common sympathies and a common origin.

Both, in fact, derive their descent from that ancient Semi-Byzantine school of Florence, which seems to have co-existed with the Giotteschi all along, though thrown into the shade by them,*—springing in the first instance from Andrea Tafi and the Byzantine artists who worked in the Baptistery and at S. Maria Novella—represented by Cimabue during the latter years of the thirteenth century, and by Buffalmacco, pupil of Andrea, at the commencement of the fourteenth,—and of which Orcagna, the first full recipient of the influence of Niccola Pisano, was certainly the head and representative towards the middle of that century, and Fra Angelico during the corresponding years of the succeeding one. Even Uccello, the contemporary of the latter painter, though dramatic in his taste and an alien from its spirit—an adherent of Ghiberti rather than Donatello—derives his descent, if I mistake not, from the same original stock. Throughout this succession, it is easier to feel and assert than to define and demonstrate its existence, propagation and influence.

* Vasari recognises this succession when, in relating the foundation of the Company of Painters in 1350, he speaks of "i maestri che allora vivevano, così della vecchia maniere Greca come della nuova di Cimabue,"—Vasari, it must be observed, sometimes attributing the restoration of the art to Cimabue, sometimes and more usually to Giotto.

SECTION I.—*Andrea Orcagna.*

I HAVE already repeatedly spoken of Orcagna, as having attained consummate excellence, not in one only, but in each of the three arts, and stamped his name indelibly on the imagination of the fourteenth century. Yet it was neither as Architect nor Sculptor, exquisitely beautiful as his works in those departments are, that he influenced posterity; the Loggia de' Lanzi merely foreshadowed the innovations of Brunellesco—the tabernacle of Orsanmichele was neither rivalled nor imitated—his school in Sculpture died with him; but in Painting it was otherwise,—he left no school, properly speaking, but his works exerted a marked and enduring influence on the progress of Christian art. It would appear also that he esteemed the character of a Painter his highest title of honour, having adopted it in preference to that of Sculptor in the inscription on the tabernacle;* as such therefore, emphatically, I have

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* *Vide supra*, tom. ii, p. 135. According to Vasari, Orcagna signed his sculptures 'Pictor,' his paintings 'Sculptor,' "volendo che la pittura si sapesse nella scultura e la scultura nella pittura." His altar-piece, however, in the Strozzi chapel, the only authenticated painting that bears his name, presents no such inscription, and his designation as "dipintore" in a public document in 1357, (*Von Rumohr, Ital. Forschungen*, tom. ii, p. 114,) and as "pictor" in another of 1375, relating to his widow and daughter, (*Baldinucci, Notizie, &c.*, tom. ii, p. 122, ed. Manni,) shews the light in which he was considered by his contemporaries. The profession of Painter indeed seems to have been the highest in honour during this first period of Spirit, of which Painting is the legitimate child and exponent. The superiority seems

ventured to consider him, and have accordingly deferred all notice of his personal history to the present moment.

He was born, apparently, about the beginning of the century,* and was christened Andrea, by which name, with the addition of that of his father, Cione,† he always designated himself; that, however, of Orcagna, a corruption of Arcagnuolo, or 'The Archangel,' was given him by his contemporaries, and by this he has become known to posterity.‡ He had

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to have been first claimed for Sculpture by Michael Angelo—in perfect keeping with his character as the type and apostle of Intellect and Form.

* Inferrible from the approximate date (*vide infra*) of the frescoes of the Campo Santo.

† This Cione is identified by Baldinucci and by most subsequent writers with the celebrated goldsmith, M. Cione, who, according to Vasari, (in his life of Agostino and Agnolo of Siena,) chiselled the greater part of the silver altar, or 'Cassa di S. Giovanni,' for the Baptistery.[a] But as the Cassa, as appears by the inscription, was begun as late as 1366, this does not appear probable. Moreover, in no description whatever of Orcagna, either by himself in the inscriptions of his works or in contemporary records, is the title Maestro or Magister ever given to his father.

‡ "Andrea di Cione Archagniolo depintore," is his full description in the document of 1357 cited in a previous note. He is frequently also spoken of as "dell' Archagniolo," or "dell' Archagño," and in 1363 (apparently) as "Andreas vocatus Archangnolo." *Von Rumohr, Ital. Forschungen*, tom. ii, pp. 115–118.—Baldinucci cites the agreement between "Andrea vocato Orchangnia" and Tomaso Strozzi for the altar-piece in S. Maria Novella, 1357, (*Notizie, &c.*, tom. ii, p. 124, ed. Manni,) as authority for the orthography Orcagna in lieu of Orgagna; Ghiberti also spells it Orcagna, and this has been adhered to by most subsequent writers.

[a] Respecting this altar *vide supra*, tom. ii, p. 138.

four brothers, all artists;* the eldest, Bernardo, became a painter of the Semi-Byzantine succession; Orcagna was apprenticed to the sculptor Andrea Pisano, and worked in his bottega for several years, till taste or accident threw him into close companionship with his brother, to whose fortunes he thenceforward attached himself. His genius soon asserted its pre-eminence, Bernardo cheerfully yielded it precedency; the fraternal cord was never relaxed nor broken; they painted in company for many years—whenever, in fact, Orcagna, after occasional triumphs in the sister arts, returned to that which they professed in common, and after the death of the younger brother, the elder, then probably very aged, acted as his executor in completing various pictures which he had left unfinished.†

The earliest works of Orcagna will be found in that sanctuary of Semi-Byzantine art, the Campo Santo of Pisa, in immediate sequence to those of Buffalmacco, representing the Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension.‡ He there painted three of the four 'Novissima,' Death, Judgment, Hell and Paradise—the two former entirely himself, the third with the assistance of Bernardo, who is said to have coloured it after his designs; the fourth, as com-

* *Ghiberti, ap. Cicognara.*

† *Vasari.*

‡ Let me here repeat the observation that in Ghiberti's curious memoir Buffalmacco, Cavallini and Orcagna are spoken of in immediate succession to Giotto and his pupils, but evidently detached from them, as an independent school,—and immediately before Ambrogio di Lorenzo, Simon di Memmo and the Sienese.

muted for the 'Angelic Life' of the desert, and painted by Pietro di Lorenzo, I have already described under the kindred school of Siena.*

The first of the series, a most singular performance, has for centuries been popularly known as the 'Trionfo della Morte.' It is divided by an immense rock into two irregular portions. In that to the right, Death, personified as a female phantom, bat-winged, claw-footed, her robe of linked mail and her long hair streaming on the wind, swings back her scythe in order to cut down a company of the rich ones of the earth, Castruccio Castracani† and his gay companions, seated under an orange-grove, and listening to the music of a troubadour and a female minstrel; little genii or Cupids, with reversed torches, float in the air above them; one young gallant caresses his hawk, a lady her lap-dog, — Castruccio alone looks abstractedly away, as if his thoughts were elsewhere. But all are alike heedless and unconscious, though the sand is run out, the scythe falling and their doom sealed. Meanwhile the lame and the halt, the withered and the blind, to whom the heavens are brass and life a burthen, cry on Death with impassioned gestures, to release them from their misery,—but in vain; she sweeps past, and will not hear them. Between these two groups lie a heap of corpses, mown down already in her flight—

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* *Vide supra*, p. 57.

† So specified by Vasari, and confirmed by Rosini after comparison of the head with the medals of Castruccio. *Descrizione delle pitture del Campo Santo*, p. 25.

kings, queens, bishops, cardinals, young men and maidens, secular and ecclesiastical — ensigned by their crowns, coronets, necklaces, mitres and helmets —huddled together in hideous confusion;* some are dead, others dying,—angels and devils draw the souls out of their mouths; that of a nun (in whose hand a purse, firmly clenched, betokens her besetting sin) shrinks back aghast at the unlooked for sight of the demon who receives it—an idea either inherited or adopted from Andrea Tafi.† The whole upper half of the fresco, on this side, is filled with angels and devils carrying souls to heaven or to hell; sometimes a struggle takes place, and a soul is rescued from a demon who has unwarrantably appropriated it; the angels are very graceful, and their intercourse with their spiritual charge is full of ten-

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* As in the lines which follow the address of Death to Laura in the 'Trionfo della Morte' of Petrarch:—

"Ed ecco da traverso
Piena di morti tutta la campagna,
Che comprender nol può prosa nè verso.
Da India, dal Cataio, Marrocco e Spagna
Il mezzo avea già pieno, e le pendici
Per molti tempi quella turba magna.
Ivi eran quei, che fur detti felici,
Pontefici, regnanti e 'mperatori;
Or sono ignudi, poveri e mendici.
U' son or le ricchezze? u' son gli onori,
E le gemme, e gli scettri, e le corone,
E le mitre con purpurei colori?
Miser chi speme in cosa mortal pone!"

—The poem having been written after Laura's death, which took place in 1348, is of much later date than the fresco,—though, after all, the resemblance is not so close as to render the question of importance.

† *Vide supra*, tom. ii, p. 57.

derness and endearment; on the other hand, the wicked are hurried off by the devils and thrown headlong into the mouths of hell, represented as the crater of a volcano, belching out flames nearly in the centre of the composition.* These devils exhibit every variety of horror in form and feature.

Below the volcano, a tract of mountain country extends to the left extremity of the compartment, representing apparently the desert of Egypt, crowned by a monastery and peopled by hermits—figurative of the life of solitude and sanctity, in contrast with that of the world, the vanities of which we have seen so sternly rebuked. This part of the fresco bears the strongest resemblance to the compositions of Pietro di Lorenzo and the Byzantines,—the landscape indeed is as rude as in the Menologion. A hermit is seated reading in front of the monastery; another, leaning on two crutches, stands beside him —both are full of truth and character; a third, to the left, milks a doe; a fourth gazes downwards after the fifth, S. Macarius, who has descended the mountain—but from whom attention is distracted by a gallant cavalcade of lords and ladies who ride past below him, their falcons on their wrists, returning from the chace, and headed by Uguccione della Faggiuola, Signor of Pisa, and by the Emperor Louis, of Bavaria; they issue from a narrow gorge of the mountains; the hermit, S. Macarius, stands on the

* According to the old and very natural supposition, that Ætna, Vesuvius and other volcanoes were mouths of hell.

lowest declivity and invites their attention to three open coffins laid beside the road, and in which are seen three human corpses in the three stages of decomposition; they look eagerly down upon them —Uguccione holding his nose; the lady on his right hand seems touched with the spectacle, but the rest are indifferent, and the exhortation of the hermit passes by like idle wind,— they scarcely look at him.*

Nothing can be more admirable than the action of the animals in this procession, the horror especially of the horses, shying back and yet eagerly peering forwards as they scent the carrion,—nor are the attitudes and action of their riders less graphic. With much to pardon as regards design, there is nothing to demand in point of feeling or expression. Verses explanatory of the subject are dispersed in scrolls, in the Semi-Byzantine taste, throughout the composition.†

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* "In the course of the thirteenth century there appeared a French metrical work under the name of 'Li trois mors et li trois Vifs.'. .These poems relate that three noble youths, when hunting in a forest, were intercepted by the like number of hideous spectres or images of Death, from whom they received a terrific lecture on the vanity of human grandeur. A very early and perhaps the earliest allusion to this vision seems to occur in a painting by Andrea Orcagna in the Campo Santo," &c. *Douce's Dance of Death*, ed. 1833, p. 31.—The Dance of Death was in the middle ages popularly called the 'Danse de Macabre,' or the 'Macaber Dance,' in allusion to the hermit Macarius, who is probably the same personage introduced in the pilgrimage of the three monks translated in my introductory Memoranda.

† Their poetical merit is not great, and in lieu of citing them,

But Death will be triumphed over in her turn by Life,—the second fresco of the series represents the scene of Resurrection and Judgment; it is, in the main, the traditional Byzantine composition, even more rigidly symmetrical than usual, singularly contrasting in this respect with the rush and movement of the preceding compartment. Our Saviour and the Virgin, seated side by side, each on a rainbow and within a vesica piscis,* appear in the sky—Our Saviour uttering the words of malediction with uplifted arm, shewing the wound in his side, and nearly in the attitude of Michael Angelo, but in wrath, not in fury—the Virgin timidly drawing back and gazing down in pity and sorrow. Six angels float above them, bearing the instruments of the passion; the Apostles sit as assessors to the right and left; below, between the Virgin and Our Saviour, an archangel holds the scrolls of judgment; a second sits at his feet, muffling up his face in his robe—the guardian angel of mankind, it has been supposed, lamenting the loss of the souls committed to his care—or one might have fancied him the accusing angel mourning over his office,—the trumpets are blown to the right and left of them, and lowest of all, and in the centre of the scene, the graves open

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I may remind the reader of the noble lines, entitled 'Death's Final Conquest,' by Shirley, beginning,

> "The glories of our birth and state
> Are shadows, not substantial things," &c.

* I never saw this co-equal juxta-position in any other representation of the Last Judgment.

and the dead come forth; the good and the bad are separated, and either led to bliss or thrust into torment. Michael the archangel, a noble figure, presides over the partition; he is in the act of bidding an angel lead a young secular, (a friend, perhaps, or brother of Orcagna,) whose humility has kept him on the left hand, to the throng on the right—from among whom another angel is detaching a monk who has risen where he has no right to be, on the side of happiness. Nearly in the middle, Solomon rises from his grave, uncertain which way to turn, and no one seems disposed or qualified to direct him—in allusion to the uncertainty generally then felt as to his salvation.

Finally, the blessed and the accursed are ranged to the right and left in two bands, rising row above row. Of the former, Adam and Eve, the patriarchs, &c., form the uppermost line; the second is composed of Saints of the hierarchy and of the founders of the monastic orders,—the third and lower rows, of kings, cardinals, queens and nuns, saved but uncanonized,—all are gazing upwards on the Saviour except a group immediately in front, of a queen helping her daughter out of the grave—beautiful figures, full of grace and sweetness.*

* The wimple, or veil, as peculiarly adjusted round the neck and over the chin in these figures, is a favourite costume with Orcagna, and may be noticed in the frescoes in S. Maria Novella and in the allegorical figures of the tabernacle at Orsanmichele. It occurs also in the life of S. Umiltà by Buffalmacco, in the painting by Bruno, engraved by Rosini, tav. 12, and occasionally in the works of Fra Angelico, and might almost be regarded

One feeling for the most part pervades this side of the composition,—there is far more variety in the other; agony is depicted with fearful intensity and in every degree and character; some clasp their hands, some hide their faces, some look up in despair, but none towards Christ; others seem to have grown idiots with horror,—a few gaze, as if fascinated, into the gulf of fire towards which the whole mass of misery are being urged by the ministers of doom—the flames bite them, the devils fish for and catch them with long grappling-hooks,—in sad contrast to the group on the opposite side, a queen, condemned herself but self-forgetful, vainly struggles to rescue her daughter from a demon who has caught her by the gown and is dragging her backwards into the abyss—her sister, wringing her hands, looks on in agony—it is a fearful scene.

A vast rib or arch in the walls of pandemonium admits one into the contiguous gulf of Hell, forming the third fresco, or rather a continuation of the second—in which Satan sits in the midst, in gigantic terror, cased in armour and crunching sinners—of whom Judas, especially, is eaten and ejected, re-eaten and re-ejected again and again for ever. The punishments of the wicked are portrayed in circles numberless around him. But in everything save horror this compartment is inferior to the preceding, and it has been much injured and repainted. And I

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as a peculiar attribute or mark of the Semi-Byzantine succession at Florence.

would recommend no one to familiarize himself either with this or any similar representations of the subject, who has the slightest apprehension of nocturnal visions akin to those which proved so fatal to Spinello.*

These frescoes—I allude especially to the Triumph of Death and the Judgment—must be seen and fitly pondered before they can be appreciated. Their technical merits are less in composition than in the individual figures and isolated groups—there is an utter want of perspective and proportion; but these very deficiencies aid the impression, bring you into closer contact with the poet's thought, ring the passing-bell more loudly in your ear, and place you face to face with death and doom's day. The figure of Death in the first compartment is sublime; the prevailing colouring in both is a bluish grey, strong, powerful, and fervid, in perfect harmony with the subject, and resembling that in the Last Judgment of Michael Angelo. But there is tenderness too intermingled throughout, and it is interesting to observe the different aspect in which the scene of dread has been contemplated by these two great artists, representatives severally of Imagination and Reason as informed by Spirit, or Christianity. While Michael Angelo's leading idea seems to be the self-

* The Inferno was repainted and much altered in 1530; a fac-simile of a very rude engraving representing it in its original state will be found in the second volume of Morrona's 'Pisa Illustrata.' Engravings of the three compartments are given by Lasinio in the great work on the Campo Santo.

concentration and utter absorption of all feeling into the one predominant thought, 'Am I, individually, safe?' resolving itself into two emotions only, doubt and despair—all diversities of character, all kindred sympathies annihilated under their pressure—those emotions uttering themselves, not through the face but the form, by bodily contorsion, rendering the whole composition, with all its overwhelming merits, a mighty hubbub—Orcagna's, on the contrary, embraces the whole world of passions that make up the economy of man, and these not confused or crushed into each other, but expanded and enhanced in quality and intensity commensurably with the 'change' attendant upon the resurrection—variously expressed indeed, and in reference to the diversities of individual character, which will be nowise compromised by that change, yet from their very intensity suppressed and subdued, stilling the body and informing only the soul's index, the countenance. All therefore is calm; the saved have acquiesced in all things, they can mourn no more; the damned are to them as if they had never been,—among the lost grief is too deep, too settled for caricature, and while every feeling of the spectator, every key of the soul's organ, is played upon by turns, tenderness and pity form the under-song throughout and ultimately prevail; the curse is uttered in sorrow rather than wrath, and from the pitying Virgin and the weeping archangel above, to the mother endeavouring to rescue her daughter below, and the young secular led to paradise under the approving smile of S.

Michael, all resolves itself into sympathy and love.—Michael Angelo's conception may be more efficacious for teaching by terror—it was his object, I believe, as the heir of Savonarola and the representative of the Protestant spirit within the bosom of Catholicism; but Orcagna's is in better taste, truer to human nature, sublimer in philosophy, and (if I mistake not) more scriptural. It is not a little curious that Michael Angelo, thoroughly as he embraced, mastered and re-imprinted himself on the Cinquecento movement, was an Anti-Giottesco and a Semi-Byzantine by direct descent, like his predecessor of the Campo Santo.*

Of the remaining works of Orcagna, executed in fresco subsequently to his return to Florence—of the Judgment, Paradise, and Hell, the "tre magnifiche istorie" recorded by Ghiberti, at S. Croce, (in which, we are told by Vasari, he painted his enemies among the condemned and his friends among the blest, as Michael Angelo did afterwards in the Sistine chapel,)

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* The date of these frescoes is not recorded, but we may approximate to it by the considerations, that the death of Castruccio Castracani, which is not obscurely hinted in the first of the series, took place in September, 1328,—that the Emperor Louis of Bavaria visited Pisa in 1327 and 1329,—that the style of Pietro di Lorenzo's Madonna in the Uffinj, dated 1342, is so much more mature than that of his fresco of the Fathers of the Desert as to throw the latter back to the earliest period consistent with probability,—and that that period is 1330, prior to which year he was fully occupied at Siena. Probably therefore the frescoes of Orcagna were painted in 1329 or 1330. Förster, I may add, considers them not painted in fresco. But see above, p. 88.

—of his frescoes in two chapels of the SS. Annunziata, (the church of the Servites,) in the refectory of S. Agostino, and in the Lady-chapel of S. Maria Novella—all of them enumerated by Ghiberti *—none survive,—though his compositions in the latter are said to have furnished hints to Domenico Ghirlandajo for those with which he repainted it after wet and neglect had almost effaced the original series.† But the frescoes in the Strozzi chapel, or that of S. Domenico, in the North transept of the same church, attributed to him by Vasari, though to his brother Bernardo by Ghiberti—and unquestionably of the same school—are still in tolerable preservation, and merit the closest examination.

They represent in three large compartments, on the three walls of the chapel, the same solemn scenes of Judgment, Paradise, and Hell, but varied in action, and evidently by one in whom youthful passion has settled into calm. The Judgment and Resurrection are represented above and on either side of the window. Our Saviour appears, as usual, attended by his angels displaying the instruments of the passion and blowing the summons; the Apostles sit as assessors to the right and left, the Baptist and the Virgin, respectively, kneeling between them and Our Saviour, the latter near his feet, with her hands folded on her breast, her face full of virgin purity

* After mentioning the Lady-chapel, he adds, "E moltissime altre cose dipinse nella detta chiesa."

† *Vasari.*

and holiness, like a Madonna of Fra Angelico; the resurrection takes place below—men and women of all estates, each testifying in look and attitude the emotions of the hour—all evidently portraits, and in the costume of the time; each party is terminated by five conspicuous figures in a row behind, five Saints in the one instance, five heresiarchs (apparently, for the chapel is very dark) in the other; in front of these bands, the graves open and the hosts of heaven and hell apportion their belongings, while on the left-hand or Western wall, an angel is seen leading a woman to join the company of the elect.

The whole of this Western wall, on the right hand of Christ, is covered with a representation of Paradise or Heaven. Our Saviour and the Virgin are seated side by side, as in the Last Judgment at Pisa, under a magnificent canopy, and attended to the right and left by the company of the Saints, in two hosts of twelve rows each, extending from top to bottom on either side, the intermediate space being occupied by the secular elect in the dress of the times,—two angels, one singing praises to his viol, the other kneeling in prayer, in the clear space above, typifying the worship of eternity. There is little or no connection between the different parts of the fresco,—in the upper row there is not even an attempt at composition; the figures are merely associated side by side in unbroken lines, an angel and a saint alternately; but the female saints below, on the immediate foreground, are agreeably grouped—their attitudes noble and graceful, their features

beaming with rapture and beatitude in a degree surpassed only by Fra Angelico, who, I have little doubt, drank inspiration from them like Dante from the smile of Beatrice; most of them, and of their brethren in the upper rows, are distinguishable by their emblems.

Facing this, on the Eastern or right-hand wall, is represented the Inferno, from which the chapel seems to have received its popular name in the fifteenth century;* scarcely a vestige of it has escaped the restorer's hand, but it presents a map rather than a picture of the dreary regions, very different from the composition at Pisa. The popular ideas which Dante amplified so grandly are everywhere recognisable.†

On each of the four spaces formed by the ribs of the groined roof, S. Domenic is represented seated, with the emblem of one of the Cardinal Virtues, and attended by angels.

Finally, the altar-piece painted in tempera, and divided into three compartments, represents, in a central group, Our Saviour, seated in austere dignity within the vesica piscis, receiving the office for the festival of Corpus Christi from S. Thomas Aquinas, kneeling, who is presented to him by the Virgin, her face full of sweetness; with his right hand he commits the keys to S. Peter, kneeling on the other side

* Ghiberti calls it "la capella dello 'nferno."

† As may be found by comparing the engraving of the fresco in Agincourt, pl. 119, with the quotations from the 'Divina Comedia' in the illustrative text.

in front of John the Baptist, who points to Our Saviour with his usual gesture of admonition; S. Lawrence and S. Paul, S. Michael and S. Catherine attend at the two extremities of the picture. The faces of the two last and of the Virgin, and the general colouring, bear a strong resemblance to the Sienese school, and to some of the allegorical figures in the tabernacle of Orsanmichele. A copy of the original contract for this picture is still preserved,* and it bears the signature of the artist and the date 1357.† Any argument, therefore, as to the authorship of the frescoes must base itself on a comparison of them with this altar-piece, and such comparison will leave little doubt, I think, of their being by Orcagna, though they exhibit more ease and grace, and the colouring‡ and general style are softer and more akin to the Sienese than his earlier works at Pisa. If by Bernardo—and it must be owned that Ghiberti's words seem chosen more warily and discriminatingly than usual§—we may allow him to have coloured the compositions of his brother; to admit

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* See Baldinucci, *Notizie, &c.*, tom. ii, p. 124, ed. Manni.

† Our Saviour upholding S. Peter as he sinks in the water, and S. Michael weighing a soul, are represented on the predella, besides other subjects which I am unable to interpret.

‡ I would be understood to make allowance for the injury done by washing and cleaning the frescoes.

§ "Ebbe tre fratelli; l' uno fue Nardo; ne' frati Predicatori fece la cappella dello 'nferno, che fece fare la famiglia degli Strozzi; seguì tanto quanto scrisse Dante in detto inferno; è bellissima opra, condotta con grande diligenza. L' altro ancora fu pittore, &c." *Commentario, ap. Cicognara.*

them as his, absolutely, would be to assign him a rank in art which neither his contemporaries nor posterity have ever recognised.*

Two years after the date of the altar-piece above

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* Starting from the altar-piece as unquestionably genuine, and finding the frescoes correspondent in character, Förster refuses to ascribe the frescoes at Pisa to Orcagna, but without assigning them to any other artist. *Beiträge, &c.*, p. 109.—Rosini, assuming those at Pisa to be genuine, but struck with the softer colouring of these, and finding a similarity between this softer colouring and that of the picture by Traini, pupil of Orcagna, at Pisa, presently to be mentioned, attributes the chapel of S. Maria Novella to the said Traini. *Storia, &c.*, tom. ii, pp. 81, 88.—Kügler, again, thinks both the paintings at Pisa, and these we have been just considering, by the same hand, probably Orcagna's, the frescoes of the Strozzi chapel being of later execution. *Handbook, &c.*, p. 75.

Of the remaining paintings attributed to Orcagna, I may mention the Annunciation lately in the Academy, removed thither from the convent of S. Maria Novella, and which I presume to be the "grande e bella tavola" there preserved and ascribed to Fra Angelico in the last century. *Firenze Antica e Moderna*, tom. vi, p. 378. The principal subject is in the central compartment, and the two that flank it are filled with Saints, male and female; subjects from the history of the Virgin are represented on the gradino,—it may possibly have been the altar-piece of the Lady-chapel painted in fresco by Orcagna.—The Trinity, also in the Academy, and dated 1365, but without the author's name, is, like the Annunciation, in three compartments; the central composition is the old Byzantine one; S. Andrew occupies the pannel to the right, S. Romuald, founder of Camaldoli, that to the left; on the two side pinnacles are represented in small medallions the Annunciation, and at the top the Lamb on the altar, as in the mosaics. I have not been able as yet to interpret the subjects on the predella.—The very curious portrait of Dante in the Northern aisle of the Duomo, still hanging above the spot where lectures were formerly delivered on his poem, and long attributed to Orcagna, has lately been discovered to be by Domenico di Michelino, pupil of Fra Angelico.

described, that is to say, in 1359, Orcagna completed the tabernacle of Orsanmichele, described in a former page,* and in which a resemblance to the Sienese style, similar to that observable in the frescoes of the Strozzi chapel, may also be detected. Shortly afterwards, in October, 1360, he accepted an invitation to Orvieto, to carry on the mosaics at the Cathedral,† an office for which he was doubtless well qualified as the depository of the traditions of Andrea Tafi and Gaddo Gaddi. But nothing remains there which can be attributed to him, and his history during the remaining years of his life is difficult to trace. Architecture was latterly his favourite study and pursuit. According to Vasari, he succeeded Taddeo Gaddi as Capo-Maestro, or chief architect, of the Duomo,—this, supposing Taddeo to have retained the situation till his death, must have been subsequently to 1367, the last year in which that artist's name occurs. But his great work in this capacity was the Loggia de' Lanzi in the Piazza del Gran Duca, elsewhere alluded to;‡ he died indeed, apparently, at the very moment when the purchase was made of ground for its foundations, but his designs were scrupulously adhered to; it was the thought of the repose of his old age,—he had bequeathed it to his country, and she gave it expression by working

* *Vide supra*, tom. ii, p. 131.

† See Dellavalle, *Storia del Duomo, &c.*, pp. 273, 284. He was to receive 300 florins *per annum*. Matteo di Cione, one of his brothers probably, accompanied and worked under him.

‡ *Vide supra*, tom. ii, p. 35.

it out in strict fidelity to his intentions. His, therefore, as if his own eyes had witnessed their elevation, are those airy arches—symbolical, not merely of the yearning of the South for contemplation and the classic or round-headed arch, but of the mind of the aged artist who designed them, a mind as graceful as it was majestic—a mind, like Michael Angelo's, soaring higher and higher to the last, and calming as it soared.—His death had certainly taken place before 1375, Donna Francesca, his widow, being mentioned as such in that year, together with Donna Tessa, a married daughter.*

Of his tastes and habits few particulars are recorded, except a love for the poetry of Dante and a propensity, even in his old age, to pen sonnets himself;† his general disposition is described by Vasari as "faceto, costumato e amabile"—pleasant, courteous and amiable, in thought, word and deed,—characteristics still of Michael Angelo.

There is indeed another, a technical merit, due to Orcagna, which I would have mentioned earlier, did it not partake so strongly of a moral virtue. Whatever he undertook to do, he did well—by which I mean, better than anybody else. His Loggia, in its general structure and its provisions against injury from wet and decay,‡ is a model of strength no less

* See a document quoted by Baldinucci, *Notizie, &c.*, tom. ii, p. 122, ed. Manni.

† *Vasari.*

‡ See the 'Elogio d' Andrea Orcagna,' by Niccolini, note 25, page xlv.

than symmetry and elegance; the junction of the marbles in the tabernacle of Orsanmichele, and the exquisite manual workmanship of the bas-reliefs, have been the theme of praise for five centuries; his colours in the Campo Santo have maintained a freshness unrivalled by those of any of his successors there,—nay, even had his mosaics been preserved at Orvieto, I am confident the *commettitura* would be found more compact and polished than any previous to the sixteenth century. The secret of all this was, that he made himself thoroughly an adept in the mechanism of the respective arts, and therefore his works have stood. Genius is too apt to think herself independent of form and matter—never was there such a mistake; she cannot slight either without hamstringing herself. But the rule is of universal application; without this thorough mastery of their respective tools, this determination honestly to make the best use of them, the divine, the soldier, the statesman, the philosopher, the poet—however genuine their enthusiasm, however lofty their genius—are mere empirics, pretenders to crowns they will not run for, children not men—sporters with Imagination, triflers with Reason, with the prospects of humanity, with Time, and with God.—But to return to our artist, or rather to the Semi-Byzantine succession at Florence.

Orcagna's best pupil was Francesco di Traino, or Traini, of whose pictures, however, the Triumph or Glorification of S. Thomas Aquinas, in S. Catherine's, a little church of the Dominicans at Pisa, is

the only surviving specimen. The composition is most singular. S. Thomas sits in the centre in glory, of gigantic stature in comparison to the figures which surround him; Our Saviour appears in the sky, blessing him, and sending down on his head inspiration in the shape of rays of light; similar rays descend on Moses, S. Paul and the Evangelists, seated, or rather couching, to the right and left of Our Saviour, but rather below him, forming a semi-circle above S. Thomas, and each holding the volume of his writings open in his hands, and extending it towards the Saint, rays of illumination darting from their leaves upon him. The whole sum of inspiration thus concentrated in his person is gathered as it were into a focus in the volume of his works, probably the 'Summa Theologiæ,' held by him expanded in his hands, and from which the rays of light re-issue and redescend upon a crowd of ecclesiastics at the bottom of the picture, parted into two companies, between whom, immediately below the Saint, Averrhoes lies extended in pain and as one discomfited. While, finally, on platforms raised above the multitude, and to the right and left of S. Thomas, Plato and Aristotle, typical of mere human wisdom, hold up their books towards him, and in each instance a ray of light darts down from him and illuminates the page.

This picture is in excellent preservation; the colouring is dark, but soft and transparent, the figures are stiff but very characteristic; its chief interest lies in its peculiarity of invention and composi-

tion, in which there is the germ of much grandeur. Traini was probably a young man when he painted it, and as only two other of his works are recorded, it may be supposed that he died before attaining maturity.*

None of Orcagna's other pupils attained celebrity; nothing in fact is known of them except their names. Had their works, however inferior, been preserved, we might have had less difficulty in establishing the links between himself and his successor in the supremacy of the Semi-Byzantine school at Florence, the Beato Fra Angelico da Fiesole.

SECTION 2.—*Fra Angelico da Fiesole.*

THIS celebrated artist—the especial voice and exponent in Painting of that religious rapture or ecstasy produced by the action of Spirit, or of the moral principle, on Sense through the medium of the Imagination, and which finds but an insufficient expression even in poetry—was born at Vicchio, in the district of Mugello, near Florence, during the last quarter of the fourteenth century, it is said in 1387, and was baptized by the name of Guido.† Of a gentle nature, averse to the turmoil of the world, and pious to en-

* This picture is engraved in Rosini, tav. 20.—He painted also a portrait of S. Domenic, erect, with six small subjects from his life on the predella, for the same church. *Vasari.*—And "Francesco del q. [quondam] Traino" painted the banner of the fraternity "della Laude" in the church of S. Maria Maggiore at Pisa, in 1341. *Ciampi, Notizie,* &c., p. 117.

† *Vasari,* and see *infra.*

thusiasm, though as free from fanaticism as his youth was innocent of vice, he determined, at the age of twenty, though well provided for in a worldly point of view, to retire to the cloister; he professed himself accordingly a brother of the monastery of S. Domenico at Fiesole in 1407,* assuming his monastic name from the Apostle of love, S. John.† He acquired from his residence there the distinguishing surname 'da Fiesole,'—and a calmer retreat for one weary of earth and desirous of commerce with heaven would in vain be sought for, the purity of the atmosphere, the freshness of the morning breeze, the starry clearness and delicious fragrance of the nights, the loveliness of the valley at one's feet, lengthening out, like a life of happiness, between the Apennine and the sea—with the intermingling sounds that ascend perpetually from below, softened by distance into music, and by an agreeable compromise, at once giving a zest to solitude and cheating it of its loneliness—rendering Fiesole a spot which angels might

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* "Frater Johannes Petri de Mugello, juxta Vidicum, optimus pictor, qui multas tabulas et parietes in diversis locis pinxit, recepit habitum Clericorum in hoc Conventu, 1407." *Chronicle of the convent*, quoted by Baldinucci in his life of Fra Angelico, *Notizie*, &c., tom. iii, p. 99, but, judging by the extracts, not strictly contemporary, or (with Baldinucci) we should conclude him to have been an accomplished painter at the time of his profession.

† He is described in a document dated 1433, as "Frate Guido, vocato Frate Giovanni." *Baldinucci, Notizie*, &c., tom. iii, p. 92.—The Chronicle of the convent invariably styles him 'Frater Johannes,' and he signs himself so on a picture at Cortona.

alight upon by mistake in quest of paradise, a spot where it would be at once sweet to live and sweet to die.—But Giovanni had a special source of happiness in this retreat, in the companionship of his brother, Fra Benedetto, a devout and holy man, whose tastes were congenial to his own; he was a most accomplished 'Scriptor,' or transcriber of manuscripts and choir-music,* a profession which then formed a link between the fine and the useful arts,—it did not usually include the function of the illuminator,† and therefore I doubt the correctness of the current belief that he taught his brother the art of painting in miniature,‡ more especially as the chro-

* "Frater Benedictus Petri de Mugello, germanus prædicti pictoris," (viz. of Fra Giovanni or Angelico,) "obiit . . . . Hic fuit . . optimus Scriptor, et scripsit multos libros notatos pro cantu, tam in conventu S. Marci quam in conventu Fæsulano. Fuit hic pater devotus et sanctus, et bono fine quievit in Domino." Chronicle of the convent quoted by Baldinucci, *Notizie*, &c., tom. iii, p. 19.—To all appearance therefore Fra Benedetto survived the migration to S. Marco, presently to be noticed.

† They are considered distinct professions in the citations of Ducange, as in the eulogy passed by Ordericus Vitalis on William, son of Wido or Guy Bolleim, as a "præcipuus Scriptor et librorum Illuminator," and in a charter to the academy of Heidelberg, 1386, granting "ut universi servientes sui, videlicet bedelli, librarii, stationarii, pergamenarii, scriptores, illuminatores, et alii famulantes eidem . . . libertatibus gaudent." *Glossarium, &c., art. Illuminator.*

‡ Founded on the expressions of Vasari:—"Ben è vero che a far questi" (the choir-books) "fu aiutato da un suo maggior fratello,[a] che era similmente miniatore ed assai esercitato nella

[a] Padre L. Vinc. Marchese, author of a work cited *infra*, thinks he was younger than Fra Angelico, as it appears that he was professed in the same year, 1407, but subsequently to Fra Angelico.

nicle of the convent, in noticing his proficiency as a scribe, says nothing further; but there can be little question, I think, that the choir-books, once the ornament of S. Domenico, were executed by the brothers jointly in their partnership of skill, as well as those illuminated many years afterwards by Fra Angelico for the monastery of S. Marco,*—Fra Angelico, as we must henceforward call him, for his angelic temper and the blameless purity of his manners acquired him the epithet by popular suffrage, as well as the additional title of 'Beato' subsequently to his death, a step in canonisation which only falls short of 'Santo,' or Saint.† His full name, therefore, is the 'Beato Giovanni, detto Angelico, da Fiesole'—commonly shortened into Beato or Fra Angelico.—I may add that love to God and love to man was his sole inspiration as an artist. Provided for in all things by God, he returned to Him with interest the talent he had given,—his every picture was a hymn of praise, and all that he gained by his pencil he gave to the poor.‡

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pittura." No paintings are anywhere attributed to him, although Rosini suggests that the paintings attributed to Fra Angelico in which gold is not employed, may be by Fra Benedetto." *Storia, &c.*, tom. ii, p. 257.

* Those at present in the choir of S. Marco are ascribed by Dr. Kügler to the scholars of Fra Angelico, perhaps executed under his direction.

† I do not mean that the church formally invested him with this rank; it was merely popular esteem.

‡ This appears from his epitaph, as recorded by Vasari:—

"Non mihi sit laudi quod eram velut alter Apelles,
Sed quod lucra tuis, omnia, Christe, dabam:
Altera nam terris opera extant, altera cœlo.
Urbs me Johannem flos tulit Etruriæ."

Respecting his ancestry in art, Starnina, Don Lorenzo degli Angeli and other painters have been assigned to him as masters, though without foundation.* He seems to have had closer sympathy with Antonio Veneziano † and Spinello ‡ than any other of the Giotteschi, but this was inasmuch as they incline nearest of that race to the Semi-Byzantine succession,—I doubt whether he did more than benefit by their collateral influence. His position, in fact, as a Dominican monk, and the models constantly before his eyes in the monasteries of his order, determined his genealogy as a painter. While the Franciscans, as you may have already observed, by an apparent contradiction to their Contemplative character,§ encouraged Giotto and the Giotteschi by

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* A Coronation of the Virgin, with the date "Anno Domini 1373," preserved in the little chapel of S. Ansano near Fiesole, immediately over the door, has so much resemblance to the composition, style of heads, and colouring of Fra Angelico, as to suggest the possibility of its being a work of his master.

† As evinced by the picture of the Vision of S. Bernard in the Academy, which I have ventured to ascribe to him (*supra* tom. ii, p. 293) to the prejudice of its reputed author, Giottino, and by the undoubted frescoes in the Campo Santo at Pisa.

‡ I would refer especially to the Annunciation in the church of S. Francesco at Arezzo. Vide *supra*, tom. ii, p. 310. Speaking generally, Fra Angelico is more akin to the branch of Giacomo da Casentino than that of Giovanni da Milano, in virtue of the comparative leaning of the former towards the Semi-Byzantine taste.

§ The original distinction of the two orders and their founders is clearly expressed by Dante, Par. xi, vss. 37–39.

> "L' un fu tutto serafico in ardore,
> L' altro per sapienza in terra fue
> Di cherubica luce uno splendore."

preference, the Dominicans, on the contrary, evinced a predilection from the first for the elder Semi-Byzantine race; hence the employment at S. Maria Novella, for instance, of Ugolino, Duccio, Cimabue, Simon di Memmo, Orcagna, and Fra Angelico himself—to say nothing of Uccello and his imitators; and a similar law of patronage will be found to obtain pretty universally throughout Italy. It is a rule of the order of S. Dominic that the monks change their convents from time to time; in obedience to this, Fra Angelico seems to have resided in most of the Dominican establishments between Florence and Rome; these for the most part were filled with paintings and frescoes by Sienese artists; at Perugia, especially, the frescoes of Taddeo di Bartolo were then in their first beauty and freshness, and their influence is observable in all the works of Angelico—favourably as regards the types and style of composition, the reverse in the frequent stuntedness of the figures, though that may partly be imputed to the cramping influence of habitual painting in miniature; the frescoes too of Taddeo in the chapel of the Palazzo Pubblico at Siena were unquestionably studied by him, and in an Annunciation at Cortona, his imitation of the picture by Simon and Lippo di Memmo, then in the Sienese cathedral, now in the Gallery of the Uffizj at Florence, is evident at a glance.* It is similarly to Simon and the

* In the attitudes of the Madonna and the angel—the latter very kangerooish,—in the scrolls too that issue from their re-

branch of the Sienese school descended from Mino, that we may trace the under-tint of green which mingles with the carnations in so many of his pictures.—To the joint influence, therefore, of these various schools and masters,—to the works moreover of Cavallini, existing at that time in the original church of S. Marco at Florence,* but most especially and with emphasis, to the frescoes of Orcagna in the Strozzi chapel at S. Maria Novella, I should ascribe the gradual formation of Fra Angelico's style as an artist—not forgetting the example of the painters in miniature of whom he originally learnt, an art practised in those days in almost every monastery, forming distinct schools, but all warmly adhering to the old traditional types and compositions inherited from Byzantium.† Upon the whole therefore, the lines would appear to centre in Fra Angelico from almost every pre-existent branch of the Semi-Byzantines.

Of the productions of his early years,‡ the greatest number seem to be preserved at Cortona and Perugia, all executed originally for the Dominican

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spective mouths, and the reply "Ecce ancilla, &c.," written backwards, as in the Sienese picture, producing an odd effect.

* Long since whitewashed or destroyed, except the Annunciation, mentioned *supra*, tom. ii, p. 268.

† Respecting these miniaturists see *Rio, De la Poésie Chrétienne*, pp. 176 sqq.

‡ One of his first works, according to Vasari, was for the Certosa,—a Virgin and child with attendant Saints, "che fu posta nella maggior Cappella del Cardinale degli Acciajuoli," —of the same family, it will be recollected, which patronized Orcagna and Spinello.

convents in those two cities.* At the former, (besides the Annunciation, and a Virgin and child, with Saints, in compartments,) two gradinos, representing the lives of the Virgin and S. Domenic, are well worth notice,†—and at Perugia, the Virgin and

* The noviciate of the Dominicans of Fiesole was then performed in the convent at Cortona. Possibly Fra Angelico passed the two years there from 1407 to 1409. Supposing him however to have returned to Florence, he must have shared in the flight of his brethren to Foligno, in consequence of the adhesion of Florence to Pope Alexander V., on his election by the Council of Pisa, June, 1409, the Dominicans adhering to the deposed Pope Gregory XII. They did not return to Fiesole till 1418. It was during this exile, according to the Padre L. Vinc. Marchese, that Fra Angelico painted at Foligno and Cortona. See the life of Fra Angelico in the 'Memorie dei più insegni Pittori, Scultori, e Architetti Dominicani,' Florence, 2 tom. 1845. I have unluckily only seen this work at the eleventh hour, almost too late to profit by it.

† On the one are represented, in seven compartments, 1. The Birth of the Virgin; 2. Her Marriage; 3. The Salutation, (very sweet;) 4. The Adoration of the Kings; 5. The Purification, (simple and beautiful;) 6. The Death of the Virgin; 7. Her Apparition to S. Domenic:—On the other, also in seven compartments, 1. S. Domenic; 2. The Dream of Pope Innocent III.,—an Interview said to have taken place at Rome between S. Francis and S. Domenic,—and the appearance to the latter of S. Peter and S. Paul; 3. Michael the Archangel,—on the hem of whose robe is inscribed the painter's name, "Fra. Johes de Fie.;" 4. The Death and Resurrection of the Cardinal's nephew, and S. Domenic's doctrine tested by fire; 5. The Pope S. Callixtus, with a mill-stone beside him, slung by a rope round his neck, the instrument of his martyrdom; 6. The Supper of S. Domenic, miraculously supplied by angels, very expressive,—and his Death; 7. S. Thomas Aquinas. These two gradinos, as well as the Annunciation, are now in the church 'del Gesu,' having been removed thither from S. Domenico.—The Virgin and child, &c., alluded to in the text, is still in S. Domenico, and hangs over the altar at the extremity of the Southern nave.

child, painted on a gold ground, with attendant angels and four Saints, S. Domenic, S. Nicholas, the Baptist, and S. Catherine, together with a number of little pictures, fragments apparently of the large one, in the Sacristy—among which one only remains of the series representing the life of S. Nicholas, the remaining two having been carried away by the French, and retained for the collection at the Vatican on the restoration of the works of art in 1815. The three form a very interesting series; the figures are small but full of animation, the colouring is singularly bright and fresh, the landscape little, if at all, superior to the Byzantine.*

There is also a picture in the Sacristy ascribed to Fra Angelico, as is also the present altar-piece of the Church, which has been entirely repainted and spoilt.—I have elsewhere (*supra*, p. 98) spoken of the enormous picture now in the choir, finished in 1438, and presented to the convent by Cosmo and Lorenzo de' Medici, and which Vasari attributes to Fra Angelico.—I have also noticed (*supra*, p. 99) a Virgin and child with Saints, dated 1437, and signed 'Andreas de Florentiâ,' evidently by a pupil or imitator of Fra Angelico, in a little chapel attached to the convent of S. Margaret at the top of the hill. Andreas might have painted the altar-piece in the Sacristy.

* S. Nicholas was a native of Bari in Calabria. The first of the three, now in the Vatican, represents, to the left, his birth, when, on being put into the bason to be washed, he rose on his feet and prayed,—his sanctity was so great that even when an infant at the breast he regularly fasted twice a-week; in the centre, the preaching of the Bishop of Myra, his uncle, who pointed him out prophetically as his successor,—he stands listening, a sweet little figure in his red frock; to the right, his preservation of the three daughters of a gentleman who had been reduced to beggary and meditated their dishonour for their joint livelihood,—hearing of this intention, S. Nicholas (who had just succeeded to his inheritance) threw three purses of gold succes-

It is by no means an easy task to adjust the chronology of Fra Angelico's works; he has affixed no dates to them, and consequently, when external evidence is wanting, we are thrown upon internal, which in his case is unusually fallacious. It is satisfactory therefore to possess a fixed date in 1433, the year in which he painted the great tabernacle for the Company of Flax-merchants,* now removed to the

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sively through the window of the room they slept in, with which as their dowry, the gentleman was enabled to settle them in marriage; the three young things sleep tranquilly in their bed of innocence—the father, sitting beside them, leans his head gloomily on his arm—S. Nicholas, standing on tip-toe, drops the purse through the bars of the window. The Second of the series, also in the Vatican, represents the interview of the Saint with the Captain of a ship conveying corn from Alexandria to Constantinople, and which had touched at Bari in time of famine; the captain consented to supply him with corn on his pledge that the deficiency should be miraculously made good when he came to reckon with the Emperor, which came to pass accordingly, and he delivered the same measure at Constantinople which he had taken in at Alexandria. In the background to the right, is seen an apparition of S. Nicholas to sailors in a storm.—The third picture, now hanging in the Sacristy at S. Domenico, over one of the doors, represents, to the left, S. Nicholas preventing the execution of three innocent youths by the Consul of Myra —to the right, his Death and the translation of his soul by angels to heaven.

* As appears by the original minute, dated 11th July that year, in which it is agreed that "Frate Guido, vocato Frate Giovanni," shall execute the picture "per fiorini cento novanta d'oro, o quello meno che parrà alla sua coscienza." The contract, together with the previous one with the *legnajuolo*, or carver, for the wood-work of the tabernacle, and a later with Jacopo di Bartolommeo da Settignano and Simone di Nanni da Fiesole for the marble niche in which the Madonna was to stand —the general design, as appears, being supplied by Ghiberti—

gallery of the Uffizj. It represents the Virgin and child, with attendant Saints, on a gold ground—very dignified and noble, although the Madonna has not attained the exquisite spirituality of his later efforts.* Round this tabernacle as a nucleus, may be classed a number of paintings, all of similar excellence—admirable that is to say, but not of his very best, and in which, if I mistake not, the type of the Virgin bears throughout a strong family resemblance. Among these I may enumerate the Madonna and child, enthroned and attended by the Baptist, S. Domenic, S. Thomas Aquinas, and S. Peter Martyr, formerly in the church of the latter Saint, now in the gallery of the Uffizj,—the altar-piece in the Dominican church at Fiesole, sadly spoilt by restoration even in Vasari's time, but in which the sweet, pure, and virginal expression of the Madonna is still traceable, while the loggia behind her and the landscape indicate an improvement from the collateral influence of the Cinquecento,†—and similarly, her Coronation,

is printed at full length in the 'Memorie Originali Italiane risguardanti le Belle Arti,' Fourth Series, Bologna," 1843, pp. 109, sqq.

* Two or three of the little paintings, exquisite miniatures, preserved in one of the small rooms adjacent to the Tribune in the Gallery of the Uffizj, belonged originally to this tabernacle. Among them may be mentioned the Adoration of the Kings, and the S. Peter preaching, with S. Mark taking notes from his sermon,—the woman in the veil, tightly bound round her neck in the manner of Orcagna, is an admirably expressive figure.

† The predella representing Our Saviour's Second Advent, is a copy; the original was some years since in the possession of Signor Valentini, the Russian Consul at Rome. *Von Rumohr, Ital. Forschungen*, tom. ii, p. 254.

once also at Fiesole, now in the Louvre, a picture which, although inferior to many I have since seen, and injured by restoration, I never think of without a glow of delight, from the remembrance of the interest it excited in me for early Italian art when resident as a boy at Paris. The history of S. Domenic on the predella, and especially the composition representing the miraculous supply of food in answer to his prayer, is in fact superior to the figures in the upper part.*

Another important date may be fixed within a year or two of the truth. Cosmo de' Medici, that true father of his country, whose sympathies in art and those of his son Piero were as devoutly Christian as those of Lorenzo and Leo X. were the reverse†—

* The subjects on the predella are seven; 1. The Dream of Pope Innocent; 2. The Apparition to S. Domenic of S. Peter and S. Paul in an aisle of S. Peter's; 3. The Resurrection of the Cardinal's nephew, the horse evidently copied from some ancient statue; 4. A Pietà, Our Saviour standing dead before his cross, with the Virgin and S. John, mourning; 5. The Dispute of S. Domenic with the Albigenses and the trial of his doctrine by fire; 6. The Supper of S. Domenic, noticed in the text; 7. His last Charge to his disciples, sitting upon his couch, the words proceeding scroll-wise out of his mouth, but invertedly, a stream of angels above carrying his soul to heaven. These compositions, together with the Coronation, were engraved and published at Paris with an explanatory text, by A. W. von Schlegel, in 1817.

† The simplest and most direct evidence of the religious feelings of Cosmo and Piero de' Medici exists in the letter addressed by the latter to his children Lorenzo and Julian from their grandfather's death-bed six days before the death of Cosmo, as contrasted with the conversation so elaborately detailed and (if I wrong him not) so evidently made up, by the Platonist

and whose purse was ever open for the glory of God as well as the honour of his country and the intel-

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Marsilio Ficino. It will be found in the Appendix to Roscoe's life of Lorenzo, No. X.[a]

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[a] I may be pardoned for subjoining the following translation of a document so little known and so interesting:—"I wrote to you the day before yesterday, and told you how much worse Cosimo was; since then it seems to me he has been gradually wasting away, and he thinks so himself, so that on Tuesday evening he would have no one in the room with him but Monna Contessina" (his wife, and Piero's mother) "and me. He recounted to us his whole life from the very beginning, and then discoursed of the government of the city, of his policy in commerce, of the management of his estates and family, and lastly of both of you, exhorting me to breed you up well in consideration of your good abilities, for that in time you would relieve me of a weighty burden, adding that he grieved for two things, the one his not having accomplished all he had intended, and all that he ought to have done, the other his being obliged to part with me, I being so ill in health. He then said that he would make no will—that he had never thought of doing so even during Giovanni's life" (Piero's elder brother), "having ever seen us united in love and esteem, and that when God should have disposed of him, he desired that there should be no pomp nor ostentation in his funeral, reminding me at the same time of what he had mentioned to me on a former occasion, the spot where he wished his sepulture to be in S. Lorenzo; and all this he said with such precision and prudence, and with a spirit so noble that it was a marvel, adding that he had lived a long life, and such that he was ready to depart in much content when God should will it. Further, yesterday morning he rose early, and had himself hosed and dressed completely, the Priors of S. Lorenzo, S. Marco and the Badia being with us; he confessed to the Prior of S. Lorenzo, and then had mass said, making response throughout as if in perfect health. Then, being questioned as to the articles of the faith, he answered severally to each, pronounced the confession himself, and took the Holy Sacrament with as much devotion as it is -- sible to express, having first asked pardon of all the world. All which things have increased my hope and confidence in the Lord our God [Messer Domine Dio], and though, according to the sense, I am not without grief, still, seeing the greatness of his mind and his good preparation, I am in great measure content that he attain to that end we have all to come to. He got through yesterday extremely well, and this last night also; nevertheless, remembering his great age, I cannot entertain much hope of his recovery. Make the brethren of the Bosco pray for him, and have alms distributed as you think fit, praying God that He may leave him still with us for a time, if it be for the best. And do you, being young, take example, and welcome your share of duty with

lectual advancement of Europe—had obtained for the Dominicans of Fiesole the ancient monastery of S. Marco at Florence, and employed his friend, the architect Michelozzo, to rebuild the church and conventual buildings at his expense.* He at the same time commissioned Fra Angelico, whom he at once esteemed and loved, to paint the principal altar-piece, and as the choir or inner church in which it was placed was completed in 1439,† we may presume that the picture was finished and erected in its place that same year.‡ It has long been broken up, but

* *Vasari, Life of Michelozzo.*

† *Firenze Antica e Moderna*, tom. iii, p. 206.—Antoninus, afterwards canonized, was appointed prior of the new convent in 1437. He brought Fra Angelico and Fra Benedetto with him to Florence, and appointed the latter sub-prior. Fra Benedetto was elected prior of S. Domenico at Fiesole in 1445, and died there in 1448, aged 59. *Marchese, Memorie*, &c.

‡ If the altar-piece presented by Cosmo and Lorenzo de' Medici to the convent of S. Domenico at Cortona, now in the choir of the church, and finished in 1438, as we learn from a letter quoted *supra*, p. 99, be really, as Vasari asserts, by Fra Angelico, its execution doubtless immediately preceded that of the altar-piece of S. Marco at Florence. In such case Andreas de Florentiâ, who painted the picture dated 1437 at S. Margaret's may have been employed in working under him, and the predella and other inferior portions of the large altar-piece may be attributable to him. But the general character of the picture

good will, since the Lord God [Messer Domine Dio] disposeth it so; and boys though you be, reckon yourselves now as men, for your position and this present misfortune require it so, and above all things be intent in application to what may be of honour and profit to you, for the time is come when you must make trial of yourselves,—and live with the fear of God, and hope cheerily. I will let you know what rests further to be told of Cosimo. We expect to-day a physician of Milan, but I have more hope in Messer the Lord God than any other. Nothing more for the present. From Chareggi the 26th July, 1464."

fragments are preserved of it; the Virgin and child (bearing some resemblance to the type of 1433) may be seen in the gallery of the Academy, and the predella, displaying in a series of beautiful little miniatures the history of S. Cosmas and S. Damian, in the chapel of S. Luca.*

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is so very Sienese that I cannot conceive this likely. I have already hinted my impresssion that it may be by Domenico di Bartolo.[a]

* It is divided into nine compartments, the one in the centre representing the Nativity, the first and last the Crucifixion and the Coronation of the Virgin, the remaining six the history of the two Saints. They were brothers, by birth Arabs, but resident in Cilicia, subjects of Dioclesian and Maximian, Christians in religion, physicians by profession, but practising gratuitously for the love of God, and in the exercise of their vocation they had by the blessing of Our Saviour worked many cures, even on beasts, and especially on a camel which had been lamed by diabolic agency. Damian having cured a paralytic matron named Palladia, she offered him a fee; he refused it; she adjured him to take it in the name of Christ, and he consented out of reverence. Cosmas, hearing of it, gave orders that after death he should not be buried with his brother. Our Saviour appeared to him the following night and vindicated Damian. The interview with the matron is the subject of the second compartment on the predella. The fame of the brothers having spread abroad, Lysias, the Roman governor, summoned them before his tribunal, and finding they had three nephews, their sister's children, Christians like themselves, sent for them also, and then commanded the whole group to offer sacrifice. This is represented

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[a] Two pictures, however, in the Academy at Florence, attributed to Fra Angelico, have a resemblance to the darker Sienese colouring,—an Adoration of the Kings and a Pietà, in which Our Saviour, crowned with thorns and with extended arms, stands in front of the cross, on either side of which are represented the instruments of the passion and various emblems connected with it, as the ear of Malchus, Pilate washing his hands, the head of his wife speaking to him, two hands, one pouring water upon the other, &c.

I speak with diffidence, but it appears to me that the best of Fra Angelico's pictures preserved at Florence—those, I mean, painted in tempera, exclusive of the frescoes—are of date subsequent to this altar-piece of S. Marco; they are of a higher class, at once nobler in thought and freer and firmer in execution, the latter partaking in the technical improvement of the age, the former rising in excellence and spirituality in precise proportion.

The series of the life of Christ, preserved in the

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in the third compartment. On their refusal, he ordered them to be scourged, bound and thrown into the sea, as seen in the fourth, but an angel brought them out safe. They were then sentenced to be burnt, but the flames darting to the right and left destroyed the executioners, as seen in the sixth compartment. Cosmas and Damian were then fastened on crosses, and both they and their kinsmen shot at by archers and stoned by the populace, but the stones and arrows, instead of touching them, flew back and killed many of their persecutors, as represented in the seventh. Finally, as in the eighth compartment, the whole five were beheaded. But the Christians, remembering the denunciation of Cosmas, hesitated at first on burying Damian with his brother, till the camel they had healed came forward, and speaking with a human voice commanded that they should be interred together.—These paintings have unluckily been a good deal retouched.*

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* At Munich are three small and very pretty pictures, evidently parts of a predella, by Fra Angelico, representing the first interview of S. Cosmas and S. Damian with Lysias, their preservation when thrown into the water, with the additional circumstance of Lysias's delivery from two devils by their intercession,—and their crucifixion, with its attendant circumstances. The Joseph supporting the dead body of Our Saviour on the tomb, with S. John and the Magdalen extending the arms, also in the Munich Gallery, probably belonged originally to the same picture. And possibly, too, the Almighty in glory, on a gold ground.

Gallery of the Academy, would appear to form the link in some respects between the two periods.

The compositions are thirty-five in number, and were painted for Piero, the son of Cosmo and father of Lorenzo de' Medici, on the pannels of the *armario* or receptacle for church-plate in the chapel of the 'SS. Annunziata,' added by him to the church of that name belonging to the Servites.

They commence with a representation of the "wheel within a wheel" of Ezekiel's vision, figurative, according to the interpretation of Gregory the Great, of the New Testament latent allegorically within the letter of the Old; the four Evangelists, each represented with the head of his symbolical animal, and the four Apostles, S. Peter, S. Paul, S. Jude, and S. James, (who complete the list of authors of the New Testament,) stand in a circle between the spokes of the inner wheel, on the tire of which is inscribed the initial verse of S. John's Gospel; while the twelve prophets are in like manner ranged between those of the outer, or of the Old Testament, similarly circumscribed by the opening verse of Genesis. The river Chebar flows below,—Ezekiel and Pope Gregory recline on its banks, the former gazing up at the vision, the latter writing his homilies on the prophecy which records it.* This composition

* See the first book of S. Gregory's Homilies on Ezekiel, sixth homily, twelfth section,—tom. i, col. 1217 of the folio Benedictine edition. The passage is inscribed, abridged, in one of the upper angles of the composition in question, with the text from Ezekiel in the other.

is in the style of the early mosaics rather than that of the fifteenth century, but it gives the key and serves as an appropriate introduction to the ensuing series, each compartment of which is inscribed with a double motto, a prophecy from the Old Testament and the record of its accomplishment or a parallel passage from the New.

Several of these compositions are singularly beautiful; I may cite the Annunciation—the Adoration of the infant Saviour, (in which not Mary and Joseph only, but the very beasts kneeling in the background, feel the presence of the Deity, and the choir of angels, singing the "Gloria in excelsis" in the sky, seem beings truly of another sphere, creatures not of clay but of light and love,)—the Flight into Egypt —the Resurrection of Lazarus, (a variation from Giotto's,)—the Compact with Judas, (symmetrical, but without rigidity, and in which the attitude and expression of Judas are well contrasted with that of the High Priest, crafty and courting treason yet loathing the traitor—whose hair, you will remark, is in this, as in the Betrayal, represented grey, as symbolical of his crime,)—the Washing of the Apostles' feet—the Communion of the Apostles, (in which Fra Angelico has represented Our Saviour giving the wafer to S. John,)—the Agony in the Garden—the Mockery—the Arraignment before Pilate, (a composition of touching dignity,)—the Burial, or rather the Pietà or Lamentation previous to the entombment, (singularly beautiful,)—and the Descent into Hell.—The series concludes with the Last Judg-

ment, inferior to Fra Angelico's other representations of the subject, except in the greetings of the angels with those they have guarded on earth, a scene of sweet anticipation in which his fancy especially delighted—and with another allegorical composition, similar to that at the commencement, in which the Golden Candlestick of the Apocalypse is represented standing in a green meadow, the seven branches stretching out to the right and left as figurative of the Seven Sacraments, while its stem rises upwards into a cross, surmounted by the banner of Christianity, on one side of which the prophets, on the other the Apostles, float in the air, each of the latter holding the article he contributed to the creed, each of the former the prophecy in which that article was adumbrated and anticipated. In the corner, below, stands Religion, holding the Gospel and a shield, on which is inscribed "Lex Amoris," "the Law of Love."

These little pictures are worthy of a very minute examination. There is much inequality in the execution; some are very highly finished, others but coarsely,—in these perhaps we may trace the pencil of his pupils; the heads, similarly, are often full of expression, but sometimes void of it,—he seldom here attains the exquisite spirituality of his best paintings; the figure of the Virgin is occasionally somewhat clumsy, though less so than in his early works, and the Saviour's features are frequently too full:—But, on the other hand, sweetness is never wanting to the one, nor a calm and divine dignity to the other, and

the compositions, though very symmetrical, are for the most part admirable and singularly original—nearly as much so indeed, with reference to contemporary art as those of Giotto, on the similar *armario* of S. Croce, had been in regard to the traditional compositions of Byzantium. The scenes of violent action are the least successful. The landscape is still rude, yet an improvement upon the Byzantine, and trees of different species are constantly introduced, in imitation apparently of Antonio Veneziano; backgrounds of the new Cinquecento architecture, although mingled with the Gothic, occasionally appear, and receding colonnades, shewing an improved knowledge of perspective, due perhaps to Uccello; tapestry, too, one of the distinguishing luxuries of the age, is constantly represented nailed across the walls. The colouring throughout is as fresh and brilliant as when first laid on.*

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* This interesting series is in the course of publication, engraved in outline from accurate tracings, by Signor Nocchi, of the Borgo Ognissanti, Florence. The following is a list of the compositions, with the references to the text inscribed as mottoes:—1. The vision of Ezekiel, as in the text.—2. The Annunciation, *Isaiah* vii, 14; *Luke* i, 31.—3. The Nativity, *Is.* ix, 6; *Luke* ii, 6, 7.—4. The Communion, *Jerem.* iv, 4; *Luke* ii, 21.—5. The Adoration of the Kings, *Psalm* lxxii, 10; *Matth.* ii, 11.—6. The Presentation in the Temple, *Mal.* iii, 1; *Luke* ii, 22.—7. The Flight into Egypt, *Ps.* lv, 7; *Matth.* ii, 13.—8. Massacre of the Innocents, *Jerem.* xix, 4; *Matth.* ii, 16.—9. Dispute in the Temple, *Jerem.* viii, 9; *Luke* ii, 46.—10. Baptism of Our Saviour, 2 *Kings* v, 14; *Mark* i, 9.—11. Miracle at Cana of Galilee, *Exod.* iv, 9; *Ps.* xxix, 3.—12. Transfiguration, *Ezek.* xliii, 5; *Matth.* xvii, 2.—13. Resurrection of Lazarus, *Ezek.* xxxvii, 12; *John* xi, 43, 44.—

Of kindred excellence are two other paintings in the same gallery of the Academy, the Burial of Our Saviour and the Last Judgment, the former from the 'Confreria della Croce al Tempio,' the latter from S. Maria degli Angeli; the heads in the former are of singular beauty,—the Judgment is a more extensive composition than the one belonging to the *armario*, and much superior to it. The upper part is arranged in the usual traditional manner and highly finished,* the Inferno, in the right hand

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14. The triumphal entry into Jerusalem, *Zech.* ix, 9; *Matth.* xxi, 9.—15. Betrayal of Our Saviour, *Zech.* xi, 12; *Matth.* xxvi, 15.—16. The Last Supper, *Ezek.* xlvi, 13; *Luke* xxii, 14.—17. Our Saviour washing the feet of the Apostles, *Is.* i, 16; John xiii, 5.—18. Our Saviour giving them the Holy Communion, *Ezek.* xxxix, 17; *John* vi, 54.—19. The Agony in the Garden, *Is.* xli, 10; *Luke* xxii, 43.—20 Judas' Kiss, *Ps.* xli, 9; *Matth.* xxvi, 49.—21. Our Saviour arrested and bound, *Ezek.* iii, 25; *Matth.* xxvi, 57.—22. Our Saviour mocked by the soldiers, *Is.* i, 6; *Luke* xxii, 63, 64.—23. Our Saviour before Pilate, *Micah* v, 1; *John* xviii, 22.—24. The Flagellation, *Psalm* xxxviii, 17,[a] John xix, 1.—25. The Procession to Calvary, *Is.* liii. 7; *John* xix, 17.—26. Our Saviour stripped and his garments parted before the Crucifixion, *Ps.* xxii, 18; *Matth.* xxvii, 35.—27. The Crucifixion, *Is.* liii, 5; *Luke* xxiii, 33.—28. The Entombment, *Is.* xi, 10; *Luke* xxiii, 53.—29. "He is not here but is risen," *Ps.* cxxxix, 7; *Mark* xvi, 6.—30. Descent into Hell, *Ps.* cvii, 14; *Apoc.* v, 9.—31. The Ascension, *Ps.* xviii, 10; *Mark* xvi. 19.—32. The Descent of the Holy Spirit, *Joel* ii, 28; *Acts* ii, 4.—33. The Coronation of the Virgin, *Is.* vi, 1; *Apoc.* xxi, 3.—34. The Golden Candlestick.—35. The Last Judgment, *Joel* iii, 12; *Matth.* xxv, 34, 41.

* It is engraved in Rosini, tav. 34.

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[a] Translated in the Vulgate, "Ego in flagella paratus sum, et dolor meus in conspectu meo semper."

corner below, much more hastily, as if he longed to escape from the ungenial task; but the very spirit of paradise illumines the opposite angle, where the elect are assembled in their beatitude—some basking (as it were) in the benignant glance of Christ, others ascending heralded by angels, who weave a dance of mystic harmony around them, towards the gates of the Celestial City, whence a flood of light streams down upon them, in which the two foremost, floating buoyantly upwards from earth, are already half transfigured. One almost fancies one hears the "bells ringing, and the trumpets sounding melodiously within the golden gates," "as if heaven itself were coming down to meet them," in the jubilee of their welcome.*

Equally unearthly is the Coronation of the Virgin, painted for the church of S. Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi, but now in the gallery of the Uffizj; the Madonna, crossing her arms meekly on her bosom and bending in humble awe to receive the crown of heaven, is very lovely,—the Saviour is perhaps a shade less excellent; the angels are admirable, and many of the assistant saints full of grace and dignity —but the characteristic of the picture is the flood of radiance and glory diffused over it, the brightest

* See the conclusion of the first part of the Pilgrim's Progress, a work in many respects akin (through the Quakerism of the author) to the mystical divinity and art of Rome. A minute and eloquent description of this picture is given by the Count de Montalembert in his volume 'Du Vandalisme et du Catholicisme dans l'Art,' p. 251, extracted from the 'Monumens de l'Histoire de Sainte Elisabeth de Hongrie.'

colours—gold, azure, pink, red, yellow—pure and unmixed, yet harmonising and blending, like a rich burst of wind-music, in a manner incommunicable in recital—distinct and yet soft, as if the whole scene were mirrored in the sea of glass that burns before the throne.* — Several of the little pictures in the same room may possibly have been appendages to it; the Marriage of the Virgin, a sweet and delicate composition, and her Death are among the best of them.†

Words really fail me in speaking of these remarkable productions; they are so unlike anything else, and the emotions which inspired them, and which they re-excite in the spectator, are so peculiar and inexpressible by language, that it would be folly to attempt their utterance.

Of similar character, and (if I err not) still higher excellence, are the reliquaries preserved in the sa-

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* The nuns having been transferred to their present convent of S. Maria Maddalena by Eugene IV. in 1442, (*Firenze Ant. et Mod.*, tom. iv, p. 39,) this may possibly be the date of the picture. I have followed Lanzi's authority, supported by the description of a Coronation of the Virgin by Fra Angelico in S. Maria Maddalena by the author of the 'Firenze Antica,' &c., but Signor Masselli, the editor of the recent Florentine edition of Vasari, says that the picture in the Uffizj is the same with the one mentioned by Vasari (who does not name the subject) "sul tramezzo di S. Maria Nuova."—The chronicle of S. Domenico at Fiesole, cited by Baldinucci, certainly mentions a picture by Fra Angelico "in S. Egidio in loco Hospitalis S. M. Nuovæ," and does not mention any as done by him in S. M. Maddalena de' Pazzi.

† The 'Sposalizio' is engraved in Rosini, tav. 33.

cristy of S. Maria Novella. On one are represented the Annunciation and the Adoration of the Kings—exquisite alike in composition, expression and manual execution—the Virgin calmly beautiful—the Kings characterised by the deepest awe and reverence, while the predella is ornamented with small figures of the Virgin and child, attended to their right by S. Mary Magdalen, S. Lucia, S. Margaret, S. Apollonia and S. Catherine of Siena—to their left by S. Catherine of Alexandria, S. Agnes, S. Cecilia, S. Dorothy and S. Ursula; on the other, the Virgin stands upright, with the child in her arms who caresses her with his hand, pressing his cheek to hers, an expression of the humanity akin to the Sienese taste; on the predella, S. Domenic appears in the centre, attended by S. Peter Martyr and S. Thomas Aquinas, holding the tabernacle of the host in his right hand, rays of light rushing from the open door, and in his left, the office of the festival of Corpus Christi.*

All the preceding pictures are in tempera, and so too is the celebrated Deposition from the Cross, painted for the Trinità, but now preserved with so many similar treasures in the Academy. The composition is of singular beauty, the figures are of a much larger size than usual, but rather short of stature, like those of Taddeo di Bartolo, but the atti-

* There is a third reliquary also, representing the Coronation of the Virgin, with the Adoration of the child on the predella—less good.—Since writing the above, I find in the work of Father Marchese, that these reliquaries were executed for Fr. Giov. Masi, who died in 1430, *Memorie*, &c. tom. i, p. 305.

tudes and heads are full of expression,—that of Nicodemus has a peculiar interest as the portrait of the amiable and excellent Michelozzo;* the landscape is far superior to any other of Fra Angelico's attempts, resembling the later style of his pupil Benozzo,—an improvement attributable, if I mistake not, to the contemporary art of Flanders;† all the details are finished with care, and the colouring is as fresh as ever after the lapse of four centuries.‡ But, with all these merits, it cannot be denied that it has the appearance of an immense miniature, to an unpleasant degree, and I have placed it last on my list accordingly, thinking that, in composition at least, it may have been one of his first attempts in large, and may thus serve as a link of connection between the easel-paintings which we have been just reviewing and his more extensive works in fresco—to which we must now direct our attention.

I mentioned some pages back that Cosmo de' Medici rebuilt, not merely the church but the monastery

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* "Joseph d'Arimathie," observes M. Rio, "montre à un autre personnage les cloux sanglans qui ont percé les pieds et les mains de Jésus Christ. Ce geste muet en dit plus que la plus éloquente tirade de Klopstock." *De la Poésie Chrétienne*, p. 196.—Hence, probably, Perugino's adoption of the idea in his exquisite Pietà, in the Pitti palace. The idea is older, indeed, than Fra Angelico.

† Possibly through the medium of Gentile da Fabriano, whose frescoes at Rome I have spoken of *supra*, tom. ii, p. 355.

‡ Some of the little Saints on the pilasters are beautiful. It has been engraved in the series now publishing of the ancient paintings preserved in the Academy.

of S. Marco for the Dominicans of Fiesole. The latter was begun in 1437, and not completely finished till 1452,* but the separation of the two establishments, and the appointment of a distinct and independent Prior over that at S. Marco, took place as early as 1445.† The monastery, as we now behold it, is covered with frescoes by Fra Angelico; many of them doubtless were painted before that year, as soon as the walls were ready for the plaster; others again are so superior, and betray so practised a hand, that it is difficult not to reckon them among his latest works. These therefore I shall postpone for the present. But among the former class may be mentioned those in the upper corridor and in some of the cells in the oldest part of the building. In the corridor, at the top of the stairs, is an Annunciation, probably the earliest of the series—full of faults, but imbued with the sweetest feeling; there is a look of naive curiosity, mingling with the modest

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* See the life of Michelozzo by Vasari. According to this account, twenty cells with the refectory were first built and roofed in, after which a delay ensued in consequence of a law-suit started by the proprietors of the original monastery; after this had been settled in favour of the actual possessors, the library was built and the dormitory finished, and last of all the cloister, the whole being completed in 1452. Cosmo spent 36,000 ducats on the building, beside the annual sum of 366, which he allowed the monks for their sustenance during its erection.

† "Post separationem Sancti Marci de Florentiâ et Sancti Dominici di Fæsulis anno Domini 1445, unusquisque Conventus habuit proprium Priorem." *Chron. of S. Domenico of Fiesole, ap. Baldinucci*, tom. iii, p. 100.

and meek humility of the Virgin, which almost provokes a smile.* Further on, turning to the left, is a Crucifixion, with S. Domenic embracing the cross, and a Virgin and child, attended by Saints, in which the resemblance of the type of the Madonna to that in the various pictures which cluster round the central date of 1433, is again visible. But none of these are equal, I think, to his paintings in tempera, and their inferiority to the other frescoes in the convent may be accounted for perhaps by an intervening visit to Rome, where we find him in the spring of 1447, painting in the Vatican.

A curious train of circumstances led to his employment there. Eleven years before, a celebrated book-collector of Florence, Niccolò Niccoli, had bequeathed his library to the public, but on investigating his affairs it appeared that the payment of his debts would necessitate its sale and defeat his intention. Cosmo de' Medici offered to become responsible to the creditors on the library being made over to himself; the proposition was agreed to, and he placed it in the new monastery of S. Marco, for public use. One Tomaso Calendrino, the son of a physician of Sarzana, passionately attached to literature and an exquisite 'Scriptor' or scribe, was then at Florence; Cosmo employed him in arranging and

* Under it appears the following singular inscription,—"Salve, Mater Pietatis, Eternæ Trinitatis nobile Triclinium!"—No scrolls (to the best of my recollection) are introduced into the field of any of these compositions.

cataloguing the library;* Fra Angelico was at the time painting in S. Marco, and Tomaso had thus an opportunity of becoming well acquainted with his merits, both as an artist and as a man. In February 1446-7, on the death of Eugene IV., Tomaso was elected Pope, and had scarcely seated himself in the Vatican before he conceived the idea of rivalling antiquity and asserting the supremacy of Christianity by the creation of a new Rome, a city of palaces and churches, as the metropolis of the world. His gigantic schemes belong to a later period of Italian art, but they dawned with the invitation he sent to Fra Angelico immediately on his accession, and which met with instant obedience. Angelico there painted the private chapel of Pope Nicholas, dedicated to the deacons S. Stephen and S. Lawrence, and still existing, the sole relic of the original palace of the Vatican.†

The frescoes represent the history of the two Saints, and may be briefly enumerated as follows:—

1. To the left, the Consecration of the seven deacons—S. Stephen receiving from S. Peter the Sacramental Cup, in token of his office.—To the right, he

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* See Roscoe's 'Life of Lorenzo de' Medici,' tom. i, p. 39, and Hallam's 'Introduction to the Literature of Europe,' &c., tom. i, p. 139.

† *Handbook for Central Italy*, p. 387.—Dellavalle and Rio assign the invitation to Eugene IV., which at first sight seems probable, but the authority of Vasari, the character of Nicholas, and the tradition of the Vatican incline me to adhere to the opinion expressed in the text.

distributes the alms of the Church to the widows and the orphans.

II. To the left, he preaches, a noble figure; the attitudes of his audience are admirable; his opponents, of the Synagogue, listen in the background.—To the right, he defends himself before the Sanhedrim.

III. To the left, he is cast out of the city,—and to the right, stoned.

IV. S. Lawrence is ordained deacon by Pope Sixtus II.

V. Sixtus, about to be led away to prison for refusing to give up the treasures of the church to the prefect Decius, delivers them to S. Lawrence, commanding him to distribute them among the poor:—He is seen doing so to the right of the compartment.

VI. To the left, he is arraigned before the prefect. Three days having been granted him on his promise to deliver up the treasures, he collected the poor and the maimed, the lepers, widows, and self-dedicated virgins, and presented them as such to Decius, who in a transport of rage condemned him to be broiled alive:*—he lies stretched on the gridiron to the right.

* A most curious and characteristic account of this scene is given by Prudentius in his hymn in honour of S. Lawrence, written towards the close of the fourth century. "Three days," says he, "he ran to and fro about the city, seeking out in all the streets the infirm and the poor—all who had been wont to live on the alms of the Church. He assembled them together, a motly company; here came the blind man, feeling his uncertain way with his staff—there the cripple, with broken knee or wanting a leg,

In the background, between the two groups, he is seen through the window of his prison, baptizing and blessing his gaoler, who had been converted by his constancy. His martyrdom took place in A.D. 258.

The composition is for the most part admirable throughout the series, the expression varied and excellent, except when he attempts the delineation of violent passion,—the martyrdom of S. Stephen, for

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or with one shorter than the other, limping as he went—here a man with a withered arm—there a wretch ulcered all over, or a leper. He took account of them one by one, and placed them in long array in front of the Church.—And now the appointed day had arrived, and the avaricious judge was burning in anticipation of the fulfilment of the promise. 'Come,' said Lawrence, 'and behold the riches of our God exposed in his temple—you will find the court glittering with golden vases—talents piled in the portico!'—They went together, and all Rome followed them; they came to the door of the church, and behold a crew homely to the view! They burst out into full cry for alms. The prefect stood mute with amazement, and then turning furiously towards Lawrence—'Why angry?' said the martyr—'Why threaten me? What displeases you? Are treasures like these to be spit upon as vile or worthless? These are not the wretched beings they appear to be, but immortal spirits, robed in purple and wearing golden crowns. Vice only is vile, sin only is leprosy. Here is the gold of the Church—these are the riches I promised you, which neither fire can consume nor robbery deprive you of. And I add gems of price too—for Christ is not poor,—gems glittering with light, the ornament of his temple. Look upon these dedicated Virgins—behold yon inviolate old women—and those widows, conscious of no second flame! These are the necklace of the Church, these the gems of her attire; thus dowered, she hath grace with Christ,—these are the jewels of her lofty brow! Take them then—adopt these talents as your own—and you will adorn Rome, enrich your master, and will become richer yourself.'"—*Hymnus in honorem Divi Laurentii*, vss. 142–185; 273–312.

instance, is very weak and feeble; the design is much improved, especially in the female figure; the draperies are noble and dignified,—he repeatedly introduces little children, and though inferior to those of his pupil Benozzo, they are sweet and graceful, and far superior to the miniature men and women of the Giotteschi; Antonio Veneziano had led the way to this in Painting, and Giacomo della Quercia and Donatello in Sculpture. The attitudes of the beggars are also admirably characteristic—another point of resemblance to Antonio. The architecture in the backgrounds is in the richest Cinquecento style, and as usual, very symmetrical, colonnades receding in perspective, columned courts with trees rising over them, and rich draperies nailed across from pillar to pillar. In all these external points the influence of Masaccio and Uccello, and of the great sculptors Ghiberti and Donatello, is discernible, but without the slightest infringement on his inner life and individuality—or, as I should rather term it, his Catholicity of communion with the whole race of the elder Christian artists. The chief fault in these frescoes (as in other of his larger compositions) is a certain stuntedness in many of the figures, which detracts from their dignity, and a certain indescribable want of largeness in the general arrangement and execution which gives them, like the Deposition in the Academy at Florence, the appearance of miniatures magnified. But, amidst so much grace and beauty, I feel it almost sinful to hint at such defects.

Besides the above, full-length figures of S. Augustine, S. Gregory, S. Jerome, (probably,) S. Ambrose, S. Bonaventure, and S. Thomas Aquinas, six doctors of the Latin church—and of S. Chrysostom and S. Athanasius, two of the Greek—are painted in niches on the opposite walls of the chapel, and the four Evangelists on the ceiling.*

Fra Angelico had not been many months resident at Rome before the heat of the summer compelled him to retreat to the mountains. The rulers of Orvieto, anticipating this, and wishing to secure his services, had invited him to their romantic city. He entered into an agreement with them on the 14th June, 1447, to employ his summer recess of three months every year, in painting the chapel of S. Brizio, in the Cathedral, in fresco, for which he was to be paid two hundred gold florins *per annum*, his pupil Benozzo seven *per month*, and two assistants three each.† He began immediately, and worked without intermission till the 28th September, by

* The first of these frescoes, the Consecration of S. Stephen, &c., is engraved in Rosini, tav. 62, and the whole series in the seventh volume of Pistolesi's great work on the Vatican. The chapel had fallen into such complete oblivion during the last and preceding century, "que le savant Bottari ne put y entrer qu'en escaladant la fenêtre, les clefs de la porte ayant été perdues." *Montalembert, Du Vandalisme, &c.*, p. 252.

† See the original contract in Dellavalle's 'Storia del Duomo, p. 306. In a minute of preliminary consultation on the 11th May, Fra Angelico is described as "famosus ultra alios pictores Ytalicos," and Vasari uses language nearly as strong in reference to this very moment of our artist's career, "Essendo chiava per tutta Italia la fama di Fra Giovanni."

which time the three most Southerly compartments in the groined roof of the chapel, overhanging the altar, were completed—two by himself and the third by Benozzo. Something, however, of an unpleasant nature—the death, probably of Antonio Giovanelli, one of his assistants, who fell from the scaffold and was killed—had occurred to discompose him, and he returned no more, although expressly invited to do so,* and the chapel remained for fifty years unfinished, till completed by Luca Signorelli.

Meanwhile, the two compartments coloured by Fra Angelico would of themselves repay a pilgrimage to Orvieto. In the lunette over the altar, opposite as you enter, Our Saviour is seated in judgment, supporting the globe of the universe, as in the mosaics, a most majestic figure, his face turned in reproof towards the reprobate, sorrowful wrath darkening the face of love; the vesica piscis surrounds him, and he is attended by angels blowing the summons. But the 'Prophetarum laudabilis numerus,' the noble host of the Seers of Israel, on the left hand of Our Saviour, are still finer, rising in a pyramidal group till they culminate in the swart-haired Baptist; the Moses especially is magnificent, a prophet indeed. For majesty these are certainly Fra Angelico's *chef-*

* In May, 1449, the Chamberlain was ordered to see "si potest conducere D. M. Johannem" to Orvieto, that he might work there during June, July, and August. But it appears he either could not or would not come. Benozzo went and offered himself for trial on the 3rd July, but the directors of the fabric were dissatisfied with his performance, and he returned. *Storia del Duomo, &c.*, p. 310.

d'œuvre; they shew how capable he was of expressing the loftiest thoughts as well as the tenderest and softest,—hell and sin were alone too difficult for him.

We must now return to S. Marco at Florence, where I have yet to mention the frescoes in the Cloister and the Capitolo. The Cloister, if Vasari be correct, was the last part of the monastery finished, and as the Capitolo opens and depends upon it, it is probable that the paintings of both were executed immediately after Angelico's return from Rome, and before the close of 1452. The frescoes in the Cloister have been much injured; they represent the Crucifixion, with S. Domenic kneeling at the foot of the cross, the Reception of Our Saviour as a pilgrim into the convent, a Silence, symbolical of the Contemplative life, and a Pietà. But the great Crucifixion in the Capitolo is in excellent preservation, and a very singular composition. The tree of life, with its fruit of salvation, the Crucified Messiah, stands in the midst; to the left, the Virgin faints in the arms of S. John, attended by the Maries, S. Mark, &c.; to the right, a whole host of the Christian fathers and doctors—Ambrose, Augustine and Jerome, S. Antony, leaning on his staff, S. Bernard, S. Francis and S. Domenic, S. Thomas Aquinas, S. Peter Martyr and others—are grouped in adoration, a most noble company, full of variety and individuality in countenance and attitude, yet collectively One in the concentration of their interest on Christ. Their heads are full of character, that of S. Jerome kneeling is peculiarly grand; the breadth and dignity

of the drapery is surprising, the stuntedness of stature has disappeared, and scarcely a trace remains of the miniaturist. Internal evidence would therefore of itself justify our postponing this fresco to the chapel in the Vatican. The background was originally of rich ultramarine, now picked off. The whole is surrounded by a fresco frame-work of Prophets, Sibyls, and Saints, among whom the pelican, the ancient symbol of Our Saviour, looks down upon the cross. A row of Saints and Beati of the Dominican order, branching from their patriarch in the centre, runs like a frieze below.

But the most exquisite perhaps of all Fra Angelico's frescoes—as lovely as the head of S. Jerome here and that of Moses at Orvieto are sublime—is the Coronation of the Virgin in one of the cells opening on the upper corridor of the monastery; her sweetness and purity are beyond the sphere of criticism,—they sink into the heart and dwell there in the dim but holy light of memory, in association with looks and thoughts too sacred for sunshine and "too deep for tears." Possibly I ought to have mentioned this fresco earlier, but if not actually the latest in point of date, it certainly ranks among the most consummate efforts of his genius.

There may be other frescoes in the remaining cells equally or still more beautiful, but most of them being tenanted by the brethren, they cannot be seen without intrusion on their privacy, and courtesy is so prompt in Italy, and personal inconvenience so gladly welcomed for the behoof of the stranger, that he

learns to guard against the mere expression of a wish, lest it should be gratified to his shame.*

The last authentic notice of Fra Angelico is that of his death in 1445—it is to be presumed at Rome, and in the Dominican convent of S. Maria sopra Minerva, from the existence of his tombstone in the church.† Two altar-pieces, sadly retouched, remain there,‡ and to this closing period of his career we may assign the chapel of the Holy Sacrament in the Vatican, long since destroyed,—painted in fresco for Pope Nicholas, and which from its containing the portrait of the Emperor Frederick III., "che in quel tempo," says Vasari, "venne in Italia," could not have been executed before 1452,§—and, not improbably, the picture of the Last Judgment, in

* There are thirty-two frescoes in the cells of the upper dormitory, all the cells except two being painted. Of these, "the Annunciation, Nativity, Transfiguration, Sermon on the Mount, Last Supper, Prayer on the Mount of Olives, Our Saviour carrying his cross, the Crucifixion, the Descent into Limbo, the 'Noli me tangere,' the Coronation of the Virgin, &c.," are enumerated by Dr. E. Förster in his most useful 'Handbuch für Reisende in Italien,'—a manual I would strongly recommend to every student-traveller in Italy. It is said that Signor Antonio Perfetti intends engraving the whole series of Fra Angelico's works at S. Marco. A series of chromolithographic engravings from them has been commenced at Paris, (*L. Curmer*, 49, *Rue Richelieu*,) under the superintendence of M. Paul Delaroche, after the drawings of M. Henri de Laborde,—but it does not seem likely to be continued.

† In the chapel to the left, or North, of the altar.

‡ One in the chapel of the Caraffa family, the other, an Annunciation, in that of the Rosario.

§ The frescoes represented the life of Our Saviour, according to Vasari.

tempera, in the gallery of the late Cardinal Fesch, a work of exquisite beauty, and surpassing most, if not all of his previous efforts in that line. The attitude of Our Saviour resembling that in the fresco of Orvieto rather than his earlier paintings, may be alleged as an argument for its date as subsequent to 1447; the composition in other respects is much the same, less symmetrical perhaps, but without the least sacrifice of its characteristic stillness; the angel exhibiting the cross and standing in the pure heaven immediately beneath Our Saviour, though not absolutely an innovation, is more conspicuous than in his other representations of the subject; the partition of Saints and sinners and the greetings of elect friends take place directly below, and in the compartment to the left, the heirs of salvation are led by rose-crowned angels up a flowery mountain, from the top of which they soar to heaven.—The face of the Virgin, seated in front of the group of the Apostles, on the right hand of her son, is most beautiful, full of awe and love; the punishments of hell are depicted much more minutely than usual with Fra Angelico, but with the same rapid and loathing pencil as elsewhere. The intensity of beatitude in some of the faces of the elect could scarcely be exceeded. In design too this picture is much superior to the majority of his works in tempera.*

* This picture was purchased by the Prince of Canino at the recent sale of Cardinal Fesch's collection.—In the Corsini palace, besides an Ascension, and a Descent of the Holy Spirit, there is a Last Judgment by Fra Angelico, the figure of Our

Such are the surviving works of a painter,* who has recently been as unduly extolled as he had for three centuries past been unduly depreciated,—depreciated, through the amalgamation during those centuries of the principle of which he was the representative with baser, or at least less precious matter—extolled, through the recurrence to that principle, in its pure, unsophisticated essence, in the present—in a word, to the simple Imaginative Christianity of the middle ages, as opposed to the complex Reasoning Christianity of recent times.† Creeds therefore are

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Saviour resembling that in Cardinal Fesch's, but otherwise inferior.

* Of these the following are enumerated in the chronicle of the convent of S. Domenico at Fiesole:—"Pinxit enim multas tabulas altarum in diversis Ecclesiis et Cappellis et Confraternitatibus, quarum tres sunt in hoc Conventu Fæsulano, una in S. Marco Florentiæ, duæ in Ecclesiâ S. Trinitatis, una in S. Mariâ de Angelis, Ordinis Camaldulensium, una in S. Egidio in loco Hospitalis S. Mariæ Novæ. Quædam tabulæ minores in Societatibus puerorum, et in aliis Societatibus. Pinxit cellas conventus S. Marci, et Capitulum et aliquas figuras in Claustro. Similiter, pinxit aliquas figuras hic Fæsulis in Refectoria [et] in Capitulo veteri quod modo est Hospitium Secularium. Pinxit Cappellam D. Papæ,[a] et partem Cappellæ in Ecclesiâ Cathedrali Urbis Veteris, et plura alia pinxit egregie. Et tandem, simpliciter vivens, sancto fine quievit in pace." *Ap. Baldinucci*, tom. iii, p. 92.

† For the Catholic estimate of Fra Angelico and definition of the 'Ecole mystique,' with much curious illustrative matter, see the sixth chapter of 'La Poésie Chrétienne,' by the eloquent

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[a] I have (conjecturally) supplied the conjunction "et," and amended the punctuation of these three lines, which stand in Baldinucci as follows:—"Similiter pinxit aliquas figuras hic Fæsulis in Refectorio. In capitulo veteri quod modo est Hospitium Sæcularium pinxit Cappellam D. Papæ," &c.

at issue, and no exclusive partisan, neither Catholic nor Protestant in the absolute sense of the terms, can fairly appreciate Fra Angelico. Nevertheless, to those who regard society as progressive through the gradual development of the component elements of human nature, and who believe that Providence has accommodated the mind of man, individually, to the perception of half-truths only, in order to create that antagonism from which Truth is generated in the abstract, and by which the progression is effected, his rank and position in art are clear and definite. All that Spirit could achieve by herself, anterior to that struggle with Intellect and Sense which she must in all cases pass through in order to work out her destiny, was accomplished by him. Last and most gifted of a long and imaginative race—the heir of their experience, with collateral advantages which they possessed not—and flourishing at the moment when the transition was actually taking place from the youth to the early manhood of Europe, he gave full, unreserved, and enthusiastic expression to that Love and Hope which had winged the Faith of Christendom in her flight towards heaven for fourteen centuries,—to those yearnings of the Heart and the

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and elegant Rio.—M. de Montalembert frankly terms Fra Angelico "le plus grand des peintres Chrétiens," on the principle, "que pour le Catholique l'école qui a le mieux compris cette relation entre la foi et l'art doit occuper la plus haute place dans la hiérarchie Catholique, même quand la combinaison de l'idée avec le forme n'a pas lieu d'une manière précisément conforme aux lois de l'optique ou de géométrie." *Du Vandalisme, &c.*, p. 95.

Imagination which ever precede, in Universal as well as Individual development, the severer and more chastened intelligence of Reason. Fra Angelico belonged wholly to the earlier age, a simpler and more believing, if a less progressive one; the technical improvement and anti-christian tendency of art during his latter years in nowise affected his essential Imaginative Spirituality,—it remained precisely what it was, and even anticipated the result of the struggle by drawing additional vigour from the contact. This constitutes the distinctive difference between himself and his contemporaries Masolino, Masaccio and Uccello. In them the Reasoning element predominated,—and though, after the first rush of invasion, a rival empire was soon marked out and reclaimed for Christianity, it was no longer a despotism, ruled by Spirit through Imagination as her Viceroy, but a constitutional monarchy, in which all the elements of humanity were duly represented, balanced, and brought into play in opposition to that invasion. With such an order of things Fra Angelico, the gentle, the seraphic, had nothing in common, and we fall back therefore on that distinctive characteristic which I have called his Imaginative Spirituality, as determining his position in the First rather than the Second great period of the Christian Art of Europe.*

* Let me here establish an important distinction. Pure Mysticism, as it exists in the East, despises and abhors imagery of every kind as remnants of polytheism, and seeks to lose all perception and cognisance of individual objects in the blank abyss

Expression, accordingly—the special exponent of Spirit, as Form is of Intellect and Colour of Sense—is the peculiar prerogative of Fra Angelico. Ecstasy and enthusiasm were his native element, and the emotions of his heart animated his pencil with a tenderness and repose, a love and peace in which no one has yet excelled or even equalled him. These are the unvarying characteristics of the Madonna in his paintings. The true theory of her likeness presumes her outward form to have been so exquisitely moulded and etherialized by inward purity and habitual converse with heaven, that Gabriel might have known her among mankind by her face alone, had he been sent in search of her with no other token. Subsequently to the Nativity, the mother's love must be supposed to blend with the innocence of the Virgin, and a beauty to result from the union, combining the holiness and purity of both estates, as inconceivable as that union itself was supernatural.*

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and blaze of the Light of God. This consequently affords no field for art—the 'Ecole Mystique' would be disowned as "of the earth, earthy" by the 'Perfect' Dervise. It is of the Catholic, Christian or Imaginative Mysticism, as modified by the peculiar idiosyncrasy of Europe—the Mysticism of S. Bernard, S. Bonaventura, S. Thomas à Kempis—as contrasted with that of S. Simeon Stylites—a Mysticism identical with the Oriental in essence, and which might attain to it if pushed to the extreme, but such as it is, less exalted, and allied to intellect and common sense through the imagination—that Fra Angelico is the exponent.

* M. Raoul-Rochette states the problem as follows:—"Dans la représentation de la Vierge sans tache, avec l'Enfant-Dieu sur ses genoux, l'art chrétien dut exprimer tout ce qu'il y a de plus intime et de plus tendre dans le sentiment de la maternité, joint à ce qu'il y a de plus pur dans le cœur d'une Vierge, et de

Hence, evidently, an Ideal for the artist's imagination, impossible of attainment, but which he will ever seek after, whether by spiritualizing the lineaments of her most dear to him, or by appropriating and reanimating some one of the many ancient portraitures of the Virgin,—for there is no one fixed traditional resemblance, as of Our Saviour. Every great painter, accordingly, has his distinctive type, born (for the most part) of his domestic affections,—daughters of loveliness are they, sweet as the rose, pure as the dew, capable of the holiest and loftiest thoughts, but in almost every instance marked with an individuality which distresses the imagination—while the absence of that individuality as invariably infers vagueness and insipidity. Now the peculiarity and merit (as it appears to me) of Fra Angelico is, that his Virgins are neither vague nor individual,—even while doing nothing, they breathe of heaven in their repose—they are visible incarnations of the beauty of holiness, and yet not mere abstractions—they are most emphatically feminine—the ideal of womanhood as the chosen temple of the Trinity;

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plus élevé dans l'amour divin." *Discours, &c.*, p. 5.—The theory too of her likeness is thus expressed by S. Ambrose, speaking of portraits current in his time, "ut ipsa corporis facies simulacrum fuerit mentis, figura probitatis." *De Virginitate*, lib. ii, cap. 2, col. 164, quoted ibid.[a]

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[a] "St. Ambrose reports of the Virgin Mary, that she had so much piety and religion in her countenance and deportment, that various persons, moved by the veneration and regard of her person, in her presence have first commenced their resolutions of chastity and sober living."—*Jeremy Taylor, Life of Christ; Works*, tom. ii, p. 227.

they are to the Madonnas of other painters what Eve may be supposed to have been to her daughters before the Fall,—their lineaments seem to include all other likenesses, to assume to each several votary the semblance he loves most to gaze upon.—It was because Fra Angelico's whole life was love, diverted by his vow of celibacy from any specific object, that his imagination thus sought for and found inspiration in heaven.—Next to the Madonna, I may mention the heads of Our Saviour, of the Apostles and Saints in Fra Angelico's pictures, as excelling in expression and beauty, as well as those of the elect in his representations of the Last Judgment; his delineations of the worldly, the wicked, the reprobate, are uniformly feeble and inadequate; his success or failure is always proportioned to his moral sympathy or distaste.

Of his Design I have spoken enough in the preceding pages; it was indifferent at first, but he improved latterly, both in firmness of touch and precision of outline, though he never equalled his great contemporaries.

His Colouring, on the other hand, is far more beautiful, although of questionable brilliancy. This will be found invariably the case in minds constituted like his. Spirit and Sense act on each other with livelier reciprocity the closer their approximation, the less intervention there is of Intellect. Hence the most religious and the most sensual painters have always loved the brightest colours—Spiritual Expression and a clearly defined (however inaccurate) outline forming the distinction of the former class,

Animal Expression and a confused and uncertain outline (reflecting that lax morality which confounds the limits of light and darkness, right and wrong) of the latter. On the other hand, the more that Intellect, or the spirit of Form, intervenes in its severe precision, the less pure, the paler grow the colours, the nearer they tend to the hue of marble, of the bas-relief. We thus find the purest and brightest colours only in Fra Angelico's pictures, with a general predominance of blue, which we have observed to prevail more or less in so many of the Semi-Byzantine painters, and which, fanciful as it may appear, I cannot but attribute, independently of mere tradition, to an inherent, instinctive sympathy between their mental constitution and the colour in question, as that of red, or of blood, may be observed to prevail among painters in whom Sense or Nature predominates over Spirit—for in this, as in all things else, the moral and the material world respond to each other as closely as shadow and substance. But, in Painting as in Morals, perfection implies the due intervention of Intellect between Spirit and Sense—of Form between Expression and Colouring—as a power at once controlling and controlled—and therefore, although acknowledging its fascination, I cannot unreservedly praise the Colouring of Fra Angelico.

His style in Composition is that of a Contemplative rather than Dramatic artist, delighting in symmetry, and faithful to the spirit of the traditional compositions even when induced by an inventive imagination to depart from their letter. But I have

touched upon this point sufficiently in the preceding pages.

To complete our estimate of the artist by the character of the man, I need only add a few extracts from the precious pages of Vasari—who, living in an age of Intellect and Sense, and blindly subservient as a painter to the models of degeneracy, has yet in instances innumerable recognised and applauded in his writings the principles of that elder art which he departed from in his practice—and nowhere more strikingly than in his memoir of Fra Angelico.—"He was simple," says he, "and most holy in his manners,—and let this serve for token of his simplicity, that Pope Nicholas one morning offering him refreshment, he scrupled to eat flesh without the licence of his superior, forgetful for the moment of the dispensing authority of the Pontiff. He shunned altogether the commerce of the world, and living in holiness and in purity, was as loving towards the poor on earth as I think his soul must be now in heaven. He worked incessantly at his art, nor would he ever paint other than sacred subjects.* He might have been rich but cared not to be so, saying that true riches consisted rather in being content with little. He might have ruled over many, but willed it not, saying there was less trouble and hazard of sin in obeying others. Dig-

* Vasari's words are rather too restricted, "nè mai volle lavorare altre cose che per i santi."

nity and authority were within his grasp, but he disregarded them, affirming that he sought no other advancement than to escape hell and draw nigh to Paradise.* He was most meek and temperate, and by a chaste life loosened himself from the snares of the world, oft-times saying that the student of painting hath need of quiet and to live without anxiety, and that the dealer in the things of Christ ought to dwell habitually with Christ. Never was he seen in anger with the brethren, which appears to me a thing most marvellous, and all but incredible; his admonitions to his friends were simple and always softened by a smile. Whoever sought to employ him, he answered with the utmost courtesy, that he would do his part willingly so the prior were content. —In sum, this never sufficiently to be lauded father was most humble and modest in all his words and deeds, and in his paintings graceful and devout; and the Saints which he painted have more of the air and aspect of Saints than those of any other artist.† He was wont never to retouch or amend

* According to Vasari, Pope Nicholas offered and earnestly pressed upon him the Archbishopric of Florence, and on his refusal appointed by his recommendation a monk of his convent, afterwards canonized as S. Antoninus. Antoninus, however, having been appointed to the Archbishopric in March, 1445-6, while Eugene IV. was still alive—and Eugene having already known him for many years, having commanded his attendance at the Council of Florence in 1438, &c., &c., there could have been no need of Fra Angelico's recommendation. Possibly the anecdote may refer to some post of advancement in the earlier life of these two most excellent men.

† Speaking of the angels in the Coronation of the Virgin

any of his paintings, but left them always as they had come from his hand at first, believing, as he said, that such was the will of God.* Some say that he never took up his pencils without previous prayer.† He never painted a crucifix without tears bathing his cheeks; and throughout his works, in the countenance and attitude of all his figures, the correspondent impress of his sincere and exalted appreciation of the Christian religion is recognisable.—Such," adds Vasari, "was this verily Angelic father, who spent the whole time of his life in the service of God and in doing good to the world and to his neighbour. And truly a gift (*virtù*) like his could not descend on any but a man of most saintly life, for a painter must be holy himself before he can depict holiness."‡

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now at Paris, Vasari says, "pare che que' spiriti beati non possino essere in cielo altrimente, o per meglio dire, se avessino corpo, non potrebbono, perciocchè tutti i santi e le sante che vi sono non solo sono vivi e con arie delicate o dolci, ma tutto il colorito di quell' opera par che sia di mano di un Santo o d' un' angelo, come sono."

* He seems to have considered them as revelations.—See on this point, and on his resemblance in many points to the English painter, Blake, some admirable observations in the 'Handbook for N. Italy,' p. 532.

† "Il restait à genoux pendant tout le temps qu'il employait à peindre les figures de Jésus et de Marie." *Montalembert, Du Vandalisme, &c.*, p. 246.

‡ The chronicle of the convent of S. Domenico, at Fiesole, witnesses to the same truth, in speaking of Fra Angelico:—"Hic fuit præcipuus pictor, et sicut ipse erat devotus in corde, ita et figuras pingebat devotione plenas ex effigie." *Ap. Baldinucci*, tom. iii, p. 99.—Respecting the sanctity of Fra Angelico, Baldinucci refers to Leandro Alberti 'de Viris Illustribus

Somewhat of the above character may be discerned in the likeness of the friar standing beside Luca Signorelli in the great fresco of Antichrist by the latter artist, at Orvieto, and which is said by tradition to represent Fra Angelico. The kneeling devotee in the Ascension, one of his own frescoes, in an unoccupied cell at S. Mark's, is also reputed to be his portrait,—as well as a very marked, strong-featured, under-jawed head in the fresco of the Last Judgment by the celebrated Fra Bartolommeo, a monk of the same convent, at the hospital of S. Maria Nuova.*

Of Fra Angelico's pupils, Benozzo Gozzoli and Cosimo Rosselli were the most distinguished;† but

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Ord. Præd.' lib. v, p. 250, and to Fra Serafino Razzi's 'Vite de' Santi e Beati' of the Dominican order, c. 222, 223.—The work by Alberti, published in 1517, furnishes several of the facts recorded by Vasari, but Vasari is supposed by Father L. Vinc. Marchese to have derived the greater part of his information concerning Fra Angelico from a certain Fra Eustachio, a monk of S. Mark's and a miniaturist, who furnished him with much information, generally, for the first edition of his Lives, and who had been invested with the Dominican habit by Savonarola in 1496, only forty years after the death of Fra Angelico, and while the traditions respecting him were probably still fresh in the memory of the monastery.

* It has been engraved by Nocchi as a frontispiece to the series of the Life of Christ.

† The early works of both these masters bear a close resemblance to those of Fra Angelico, though wanting his exquisite feeling and far less highly finished. Zanobio degli Strozzi, another of his pupils, but of less originality, and to whom Von

they were all of dramatic tendency, and inevitably took their position sooner or later under the banner of Masaccio; they belong consequently to the Second period, to the struggle between Christian art and Paganism. With Fra Angelico, accordingly, the Semi-Byzantine succession of painters disappears at Florence, unless indeed we may consider the new generation, springing from Donatello through Ver-

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Rumohr ascribes the beautiful Paradise in S. M. Maddalena de' Pazzi, preserved his manner through life. Domenico di Michelino, who flourished c. 1450, and painted the altar-piece of S. Zanobio in the church of S. Apollinare at Florence, (*Nagler, Künstler-Lexicon,*) was also his disciple. The portrait of Dante in the Duomo, usually attributed to Orcagna, is by this painter, and was executed in 1465, to replace a portrait that previously existed in the same place, above the chair of the professor who lectured on the 'Divina Commedia,' and from which the likeness was doubtless copied. The influence of the Semi-Byzantine succession is strongly marked in this picture. The poet is represented in middle, or rather in old age, standing, with his poem in his hand, the volume darting forth rays of fire; his attitude is that of mournful expostulation; Florence is seen on his right hand, Hell on his left, and the Mount of Purgatory in the background. It is engraved in Rosini, *Storia, &c.*, tom. iii, p. 82. —I have mentioned on one or two former occasions 'Andreas de Florentiâ,' as probably another of the school.[a] Many of the inferior paintings scattered through Florence, and bearing the name of Fra Angelico, are without doubt attributable to these painters. Among the best of these I may mention the Virgin and child, with attendant Saints, ascribed to Ghirlandajo, on the first altar to the right in the Church of S. Jerome at Fiesole. The Virgin's face is very sweet; she is seated in front of a grove of orange and cypress-trees.

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[a] Can this Andreas be identical with Andrea di Giusto, mentioned in the 'Carteggio degli Artisti,' tom. i, p. 211,—pupil for a time of Masaccio, and whose son Giusto, "per apparare nell' arte e nella virtù," placed himself under Benozzo, and worked at S. Gimignano?

rocchio, as a perpetuation of the school, as they were of the principles and sympathies which characterised it, although modified by the character and requisitions of the new epoch. Fra Angelico's influence at least, on this new succession, and through it on the great painters of whom they were the immediate predecessors and instructors, was very great, and chiefly through Perugino, who seems to have studied him deeply during his early sojourn at Florence. His influence too on the recent revival of Christian art by Overbeke and his contemporaries in Germany is well known. And I cannot refrain from adding that he has a pupil even at the present day, exclusive in his reverence and devotion, in Fra Serafino Guidotti, brother of his own monastery of S. Marco, whose copies of his paintings and original essays in the same peculiar style are characterised by a genuine appreciation of his excellence.

CHRISTIAN ART OF MODERN EUROPE.

PERIOD I.

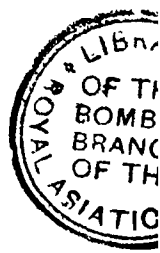
ARCHITECTURE.

Development of the Christian Element, Spirit—Lombard and Gothic, or Pointed Architecture—Rise of Sculpture and Painting—Expression.

VII. PRIMITIVE SCHOOL OF BOLOGNA, IN CONNEXION WITH GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE.

SECT. 1. *Franco, Vitale, Lippo Dalmasio, Jacobus, &c.*

SECT. 2. *Frescoes, presumed to be by the ancient Bolognese School, at Parma.*



LETTER VII.

PRIMITIVE SCHOOL OF BOLOGNA,

IN CONNEXION WITH GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE.

I HAVE sketched in the preceding pages the history of the two great schools of Italian painting, developed under the influence of Niccola Pisano, that of Florence, (in her two lines of Giottesque and Semi-Byzantine succession,) and that of Siena; I have yet to notice the third, settled at Bologna, less influential, less renowned, yet justly entitled by originality and merit to distinct and independent commemoration. It is characterised by a peculiar colouring, strongly resembling that of the ancient frescoes by Bertolino of Piacenza and Niccolò of Reggio in the Baptistery at Parma,—the same vivid reddish mosaic-like brown predominates in both, and in the early dramatic compositions of Bologna the same energy and fire,* while in composition and design it is evidently formed on the 'Arca di S. Domenico;' I am inclined therefore to derive the succession from

* *Vide supra*, tom. ii, p. 92.

the fresco-painters of Parma, or the school to which they belong, in the first instance, and in the second, from the great Niccola; the former point may be questionable, but on the latter I apprehend there can be no dissent. Of the two contemporary schools of Giotto and Siena, this of Bologna has least affinity with the former, most with the latter, although but little, in truth, with either. The three schools might be fancifully likened, in character and fortune, to the three great nations descended from Abraham,—that of Giotto and the Giotteschi to Ishmael with his Egyptian bride and his progeny of the wilderness; that of Siena to the spiritual and contemplative children of Israel; that of Bologna to the house of Edom, like it latest born, first to fall away, and earliest extinguished,—yet not before it had produced many a fair blossom of piety for the brow of paradise, not before Niccola Pisano, gazing down from his pyramid of glory on the plain below, populous with his posterity, had distinguished it with a smile.

SECTION 1.—*Franco, Vitale, Lippo Dalmasio, Jacobus, &c.*

FRANCO, celebrated by Dante as a miniaturist,* is considered the founder of the school, but his works

* In his well known address to Oderigi of Gubbio, and the reply of the latter, *Purgatorio*, xi, 79 sqq.[a]—Oderigi was

[a] It may be observed that in this noted passage Dante considers the art of illumination or miniature as distinct from that of painting, in which, he says, Giotto in like manner had succeeded Cimabue.

have entirely perished.* Vitale, surnamed 'Dalle Madonne' from his peculiar success in the delineation of the Virgin, was his most celebrated pupil. His tenderness of heart was such that he would never depict Our Saviour on the cross, saying that the Jews had already crucified him once too often, while Christians did as much every day by their sins.† This tenderness found its congenial expression in his Madonnas; one of them is preserved in the 'Museum Christianum' of the Vatican, another, dated 1320, in the 'Pinacoteca' at Bologna;‡ they are sweet in feeling, but vague and inexpressive, reminding one of some of Guido's; judged by these, indeed, Vitale would have no claim to rank under the banner of Niccola Pisano, an honour dependent on the accuracy of tradition § in attributing to him a fresco in the little church of S. Maria di Mezzaratta, outside the walls of the city.

Franco's predecessor in excellence and fame as a miniaturist; he worked much at Bologna, and is said to have been his master. None of his works are preserved.

* The Madonna, dated 1310, and shewn as his among the relics of the Malvezzi collection now in the Palazzo Ercolani, is evidently much more modern. It has been engraved by Rosini, tav. 11.

† *Malvasia, Felsina Pittrice*, tom. i, p. 28, *edit. Zanotti, Bologna*, 1841.—This very valuable work is the principal authority for the history of painting at Bologna.

‡ From the church of S. Maria del Monte outside the gate of S. Mammolo; it is engraved by Rosini, tav. xi.—A third, dated 1345, and called the 'Madonna de' Denti,' in the church of that name, also outside the Porta S. Mammolo, is engraved in Agincourt, *Peinture*, pl. 127.

§ *Malvasia.*—He calls it "uno de' suoi soliti presepj di N. Signore."

This humble sanctuary has been correctly styled the Campo Santo of Bologna.* It was built in the twelfth century, but the actual paintings are not more ancient than the middle of the fourteenth. Vitale was employed first, to paint a large 'Presepio,' or Nativity, immediately above the door,—it is his sole work there. The early history of Genesis, and that of Joseph, Moses and Daniel were afterwards represented in four rows of compartments on the Southern wall,—the life of Our Saviour in the same manner on the Northern, and the history of the Passion on the Eastern, or altar-wall. The compartments are small, and the compositions of a very infantine and primitive character, far inferior to contemporary works at Florence and Siena, yet full of fire and originality—while impatience is rebuked by the recollection that Michael Angelo is said to have commended them, and by the certainty that Bagnacavallo and the Carracci took the most active interest in their preservation.† Now, indeed, few of the series survive,—many have been whitewashed, the church has been re-roofed, cutting off the whole upper row, and having become private property, there is little security against the remainder being ultimately obliterated. Meanwhile it is a sweet and tranquil spot, unprofaned by tourists, musical with nightingales, and commanding a view which, if not equal to that from S. Michele in Bosco, will well

* By Lanzi, *Storia, &c., Bolognese School.*
† *Malvasia.*

reward you for the ascent,—while the remembrance of S. Bernardino of Siena, who loved the place and used to preach there,* lends it an association of historical and religious interest, pleasantly mingled in my own mind with that of the kindly dame, its *custode*, who after assisting me during a long afternoon's exploration, declined any remuneration for her attendance on the first foreign visitor she had had during the preceding twelvemonth.—But to revert to the Presepio. The composition is the old traditional one, happily varied; Joseph, for instance, instead of sitting moodily in his corner, pours water into a vase for the Virgin to wash the child with, and a number of angels are kneeling in front in adoration. The execution is very defective; but there is an air of grace and feeling of the ideal in the composition and in the figure of the Madonna. The paintings immediately to the right and left are by another and an unknown hand, apparently a Giottesco.

According to Vasari, the whole Southern wall was painted by Cristoforo, an artist—some say of Ferrara, others of Modena, while the Bolognese claim him as their own countryman. Malvasia tells us he was the first that painted on the Southern wall,—

* The "picciol pergamo (incastrato nel muro) ove tante volte fe' udirsi S. Bernardino Sanese, divotissimo di questo luogo, e padre spirituale di que' confratelli," is still to be seen there.

[a] Longhi's edition of the 'Passaggiero Disingannato,' a guide-book to Bologna, originally compiled by Malvasia.

if so, the uppermost row only can belong to him, the second, and possibly part of the third, having been executed by a painter named Jacobus, and the fourth by one Lorenzo. Of this uppermost row, two or three fragments may be seen in the granary above the modern ceiling of the church; the prettiest of them is a representation of Eve spinning, with her children on her knee, after the Fall. They are pale in colour, like the paintings of acknowledged Ferrarese origin and of the primitive Roman school of Lombardy, and decidedly different in style from the frescoes in the church beneath. Cristoforo also painted the altar-piece, now removed, but engraved by Agincourt, and which bore his name, and the date 1380.*

Of the frescoes by Lorenzo, representing the history of Daniel, and which were signed 'Laurentius f.,' or 'fecit'—not a trace remains. He too is of uncertain origin, and is supposed by Lanzi to be the same with a contemporary Venetian artist of that name. He describes the compositions in S. Maria di Mezzaratta as very extravagant and caricatured.† The Marriage, which seems to have been painted

* See Agincourt, *Peinture*, pl. 160.—There are two or three pictures by this artist in the Containi-Costabili gallery at Ferrara.

† A picture signed 'Laurentius de Venetiis,' and dated 1368, existed according to Lanzi in the Malvezzi gallery. The frescoes of Mezzaratta may have been by him. But if they were so bad as Lanzi describes them, I should doubt the identity of this Laurentius with the 'Lorenzo Veneziano' whose works are preserved in the Academy at Venice.

over one of the original compartments, is evidently by a more modern and practised hand, of the fifteenth century; it is singularly graceful, but has been sadly injured.*

Simon and Jacobus rank next in order among the artists of Bologna and of the Madonna di Mezzaratta. Both are said to have been of the Avanzi family,† though I am not aware of any proofs of such descent. Simon at first painted crucifixes only, and Jacobus Madonnas; of the latter none are preserved, but the former (which acquired their author the popular name of 'Simone de' Crocefissi') are to be found in most of the old churches of Bologna; like Giotto's, they have only one nail in the feet, but the emaciation is in the worst Byzantine taste, and grief in the attendant figures of the Virgin and S. John is uniformly caricatured. Many of Simon's pictures are now in the Pinacoteca, but all, including the largest, the Death of the Virgin,‡ are alike remarkable for want of beauty, dignity and expression. His best works are perhaps the Crucifix in the church of S. Stefano, and a Virgin and child, with attendant Saints, in the interesting gallery of the

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* The hands of the bride and bridegroom (the latter dressed in a short Spanish cloak) are joined by a crowned personage. Introduced as is this marriage *apropos* to nothing, it doubtless commemorates some distinguished alliance of the fifteenth century, connected with Bologna.

† *Malvasia*, *Felsina Pittrice*, and *Longhi*.

‡ Among the small compartments which surround it, is a subject of unusual occurrence, the release of the soul of the Emperor Trajan from Limbo through the prayers of S. Gregory.

Containi-Costabili family at Ferrara; I thought this latter picture superior to any of those at Bologna. The latest date attached to any of his works is 1377. Latterly he associated himself with his contemporary Jacobus, and painted along with him in fresco in the church of Mezzaratta, sometimes in the same, sometimes in separate compartments, but the latter have all perished.

Jacobus, on the contrary, has been more fortunate —or rather the merit of his compositions has ensured greater attention to their preservation. They may be easily recognised by comparison with the fourth compartment of the lowest row on the left-hand wall, representing the Pool of Bethesda, and which is signed with his name, 'Jacobus f.,' or *fecit*. In these we see for the first time the full unchecked influence of the Ark of S. Domenic. The earliest in point of date are the series representing the history of Joseph, forming the second row, the highest now visible, on the right-hand wall. Some of them are characterised by singular naiveté; the seventh, eighth and ninth are perhaps the most worth notice. There is much expression and nature in the first of these three, representing Joseph "speaking roughly" to his brethren, and Simeon being led away to prison; the countenances are all alike, but the composition is good, and the attitudes and gesticulation are very graphic. In the next, the eighth of the row, Jacob appears, surrounded by his sons; he has an open tray on his knee, from which himself and Judah seem to be scraping up with their fingers the remain-

ing grains of corn; this is intended to represent the famine in Canaan,—the asses stand by, ready loaded for their return to Egypt. In the ninth, (contiguous to the last, but on the wall of entrance,) the discovery of the cup in Benjamin's sack, the steward's accusation of him to Joseph, and Joseph falling on his neck and kissing him, are crowded into a space not above six feet broad, inducing the strangest expedients for the economy of space; Benjamin, for example, is represented kneeling to Joseph, his arms crossed on his breast and looking entreatingly up at him, while Joseph, instead of noticing him, is occupied in embracing a repetition of the same youthful figure on the opposite side; the effect is ludicrous, and yet the story is told with much feeling, and the colouring is soft and pleasing. The proportion of the figures and the architecture to the size of the compartment is almost exactly that of the basreliefs of the 'Arca di S. Domenico,' and the frequent repetition of the identical figure in close juxta-position is similar in both. The attempts at foreshortening are very curious. One of these compositions was formerly signed 'Jacobus,'* but the inscription has been effaced.

The row immediately below these, dedicated to the life of Moses, is of comparatively inferior interest, though the four last compartments (representing the Reception of the tables of the Law and the Worship of the Golden calf—the Judicial Massacre of the Israelites—the Delivery of the tables to the princes

* *Longhi, Passaggiere Disingannato.*

of Israel after their re-delivery from the Mount, and the Destruction of Korah, Dathan and Abiram) bear a resemblance to the manner of Jacobus, and may possibly be by his hand. But the remaining frescoes on the left-hand wall are certainly his. The third and fourth of the lowest row are the most interesting.* In the former Our Saviour sits among his disciples, discoursing, while those without uncover the roof of the house and let down the man sick of the palsy, who turns to Christ with clasped hands, while, to the right, he is seen walking away healed, with his mattress bundled upon his shoulders. The foreshortenings are daring to an absurd degree, and the whole composition is very rude, but it is full of life and character, and it is impossible not to sympathise with such fearless boldness. And the like may be said of the adjacent Pool of Bethesda,—the angel descends to trouble the water, a sick person stands in it praying, the cripple who had been suffering for thirty-eight years sits up in bed in the centre of the composition, looking with earnest supplicatory gaze and clasped hands towards Christ, whose attention however, like that of Joseph in the fresco described above, is drawn away from him by another work of love, the resuscitation of a little child,—he is seen again to the left, enthroned under a portico,

* According to Malvasia, the upper row were painted by Jacobus and Simon together—the first half of the lower row by Jacobus, the second by Simon. In the upper however there is little or no variety of style—Simon's part seems to have been purely subordinate.

surrounded by Pharisees, and addressing a poor woman who kneels at his feet. The groups and figures are well arranged, and there is more expression than in the frescoes on the opposite wall. The face of Our Saviour is throughout peculiarly sweet and holy.*—Of the compositions by Simon, carrying the history down to the Last Supper, and those on the altar-wall representing the Passion, executed above half a century afterwards by Galasso of Ferrara, no traces whatever are now visible.

These frescoes of Jacobus are evidently the work of a young artist, and a clever and progressive one; it is natural therefore to enquire what other works at Bologna, or elsewhere, are or may be attributed to him. Those which bear the signature of 'Jacobus Pauli' cannot be considered his; their extreme inferiority and the difference of style disprove the identity.† But in the Malvezzi collection there is stilla

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* The naked figure of S. Sebastian looking up to heaven, above the pulpit, though much retouched, seems also to be by Jacobus.

† There are two paintings by this artist in the Pinacoteca, a Crucifix, dated 1384, and a Madonna, both of them hard and bad.—Jacobus is identified with 'Jacobus Pauli' by Malvasia and other Bolognese authorities. But does not the addition of the father's name imply a necessity on the part of the one Jacobus of distinguishing himself from another, already in the field—to wit, the 'Jacobus' who signs so, simply, without patronymic, in the Madonna di Mezzaratta? Lanzi identifies 'Jacobus Pauli' with the artist of that name who painted the altarpiece of S. Mark's at Venice, and even detects a resemblance between the faces in it and those in the compositions of 'Jacobus' in the Mezzaratta,—the resemblance has wholly escaped myself, and I cannot conceive the possibility of the identity.

small picture, in six compartments,* representing Our Saviour's interview with the woman of Samaria, the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, the Prayer on the Mount of Olives, the Ascent from Limbo, the Descent of the Holy Spirit, and the Conversion of S. Paul—which I have little hesitation in ascribing to him, though at a maturer epoch of his career than when he painted at Mezzaratta; the compositions are for the most part variations of the Byzantine, treated with an originality evidently native to the painter's mind; in the Prayer on the Mount of Olives, for instance, the angel speaks to Christ, "strengthening him" with his words, while the cup is set down on the rock between them; the head of Our Saviour throughout is excellent, the figures are well grouped, the drapery is dignified and appropriate, and the colouring bright and clear. It is in a style purely national and Bolognese, without the least Giottesque admixture, and is superior, I think, to any of the ancient pictures by Bolognese artists preserved in the Pinacoteca.†

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* Probably the framework, originally, of a large central composition now lost.

† A picture in the same (Malvezzi) collection, representing Heraclius with the cross, approaching the walls of Jerusalem, and full of spirit, struck me as by the same pencil.—There is another curious picture in this collection, by the early Bolognese school, representing the Tree of Knowledge, the serpent twined round it, speaking to Eve, who has just plucked the apple; behind her Adam smells another, of the most alluring red and gold, before biting it; above, Our Saviour is seen crucified on the tree, according to the ancient legend of the cross; to the left, a female figure with a glory, apparently the Virgin, lies

But has he left any works in the neighbourhood or the more distant towns of Italy?—And are critics justified in identifying him with the 'Jacobus Avantii Bononiensis,' the 'Jacopo di Avanzo' of Bologna, who painted, according to Savonarola,* the chapel of S. Felice in the church of S. Antonio at Padua, elsewhere described?—I confess I doubt it,—first, from the decidedly Giottesque character of the frescoes there existent,—secondly, from the individuality and originality of those by 'Jacobus' in S. Maria di Mezzaratta, rendering it unlikely that their author should so completely have compromised that originality,—thirdly, from the comparative technical inferiority of the frescoes at Mezzaratta, taken in connection with the probability that they were painted subsequently to 1380, the date of the altar-piece painted by his predecessor, Cristofano, and with the fact that the frescoes of the chapel of S. Felice were painted in 1376,†—fourthly, from a certain undeniable resemblance between the foreshortenings at Padua and those at Bologna being not confined to the chapel of S. Felice, but common to the four different series of frescoes at Padua, which I have described under the head of the Giotteschi of Lombardy,—and lastly, from the utter absence of evidence to prove the identity of the two

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sleeping on a couch. It seems to be by some lingering adherent of the ancient style of painting.

* *Vide supra*, tom. ii, p. 329.

† *Vide supra, ibid.*

Jacopos, or that the 'Jacobus' of Mezzaratta belonged to the Avanzi family, or was the son of a father named Avanzo, the more correct interpretation of the patronymic,—while even were this identity established, I should be disposed to question the accuracy of the ascription to him of the frescoes in S. Antonio. It is not therefore at Padua, if anywhere, that we must look for the ascending series either of his own works or those of his followers. In the meanwhile let us recall our errant thoughts to their present home, Bologna.

Contemporary with 'Jacobus' flourished the celebrated Lippo Dalmasio, a pupil of Vitale and his heir in piety and in the surname 'Dalle Madonne.' While Cristoforo, Lorenzo and Jacobus developed the Dramatic side of painting, Lippo adhered almost exclusively to the Contemplative; his Madonnas are as numerous at Bologna as the crucifixes of Simon, but almost all have been repainted; the most beautiful of them, the 'Madonna del Monte,' may be seen in the SS. Annunziata; the colouring is soft, the face is rather unintellectual but very sweet, pure and virginal, grace mingling with and softening a hard outline; an unearthly feeling of divinity is suffused over it, thrilling the sense and the imagination like the Madonna of Orsanmichele and others by the early Semi-Byzantine painters. The veil is bound tightly under the chin, as in the works of Orcagna and Fra Angelico, and there is the same lovely yet mysterious sympathy between the mother and the child as in the Madonnas of the Sienese and Um-

brians. Guido, who, like all great masters, felt and acknowledged the merits of his ancestors in art, was an especial admirer of this painting; Count Carlo Malvasia, the historian of the Bolognese school, surprised him one day contemplating it in a sort of ecstasy, and he vindicated himself by observing that "there was a certain superhuman character in the countenances of Lippo's Madonnas, which made him think his pencil had been moved by a hidden gift of inspiration rather than mere mortal skill, exhibiting (as he did) in those pure mirrors of the ideal a holiness, a modesty, a purity and a gravity which no modern artist, however excellent, however studious, had ever been able to attain to. He proceeded to recount to me," continues the writer, "how devotionally affected Lippo had been towards the Mother of God, 'whence,' he said, 'we should not marvel that his hand so well expressed the image which he bore imprinted on his heart,'—adding that 'he never painted her without fasting the previous evening, and receiving absolution and the bread of angels' (the Eucharist) 'on the morning after,'—that 'finally, having becoming a Carmelite monk, he died as he had lived, in sanctity, never after his profession painting for hire, but for devotion, making presents of all his works, which uniformly represented the Virgin except upon one occasion when, in obedience to his superiors, he painted certain histories of Elijah the prophet on the walls of a chapel—full of spirit, as he (Guido) well remembered, having seen them before they were destroyed, to the great regret of

the artists of Bologna,'"*—an account to which I need only add, correctively, that Lippo having died married, it could only have been as a 'terziario,' or lay-associate, that he joined the order of Mount Carmel.†

The dates of his works range from 1376 to 1409;‡ he was employed to paint the great altar-piece for the new Cathedral of S. Petronio in 1393,§ probably as the most distinguished painter of the day. He is supposed to have died in or about 1410.

I may add the significant fact, that individual Madonnas by Lippo were the subject of the implied or explicit praise of no less than three popes of the great Catholic revival subsequent to the Reformation and the Council of Trent; Gregory XIII. kept one of them constantly in his room near the bed, in aid of his private devotion; another was similarly prized by Innocent IX., and on the return of Clement VIII. from his conquest of Ferrara, he is said to have halted before the Madonna painted over the door of S. Procolo,‖ and reverently saluting it, to

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* *Malvasia, Felsina Pittrice*, tom. i, p. 34, *ed. Zanotti.*

† *Longhi, Passaggiere, &c.*, p. 478.

‡ His first public work is said by Malvasia to have been the Magdalen at the feet of Our Saviour in the cloister of S. Domenico, a very inferior production. In one corner is a fragment of the signature ". . . . . lmaxi." He signed "Lippo Dalmaxii" on a Madonna in S. Petronio, 1407. His Coronation of the Virgin in S. Giacomo Maggiore is a pleasing picture.

§ Records of the Cathedral, quoted by Longhi, *Passaggiere*, &c., p. 478.

‖ It has been very graceful, but restoration has effaced every trace of the original.

have declared that he had never seen images more devout or that touched his heart nearer ("e che più lo intenerissero") than those painted by Lippo Dalmasio. The painting in question was probably associated with the reminiscences of his youthful devotion, when a student at Bologna.*

Finally, let me remark that, as in the similar case of Vitale, it is only as the picturesque biographer of Elijah that I have ranked Lippo under Niccola Pisano; I should otherwise have classed them both, with Guido and Ugolino of Siena, Giunta of Pisa, Cimabue and Buffalmacco of Florence, the painters of the Baptistery of Parma, &c., under the early Italico-Byzantine revival.

Of the contemporaries of Lippo, exclusively of Jacopo, the most distinguished appear to have been the Maso, who painted the cupola of the Cathedral, but of whose works none survive,† and the author of the frescoes in the chapel of the Bolognini in S. Petronio, formerly attributed to Buffalmacco, but now ascertained to be posterior to 1408.‡ They represent, on the left, Paradise and Hell, arranged somewhat in the style of those of Orcagna in the Strozzi chapel,—in front, the history of a Saint, I am

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* *Felsina Pittrice*, tom. i, p. 33.

† A M. Tomaso flourished from 1433 to 1457, apparently the same as the 'Masazzo,' or Masaccio, concerning whom see the 'Memorie risguardanti le Belle Arti,' *Bologna, first series*, p. 84.

‡ By the will of the founder, Bartolommeo di Bolognino, dated 10 Feb., 1408. *Longhi.*

uncertain whom,—and on the right-hand wall, that of the three Kings or Wise Men of the East, where the second compartment in the third row from the top, representing Herod's consulting the priests as to the birth-place of the Messiah, is worthy of notice. These frescoes are by no means void of merit.

I cannot however speak so favourably of the works of Lippo's pupils,—they all degenerated, there does not seem to have been a man of genius among them; a multitude, moreover, of Byzantine paintings were brought to Bologna during the first half of the fifteenth century, and eagerly bought by the populace,—the very painters themselves caught the contagion, and many of the pictures now in the Pinacoteca might be mistaken for works of the twelfth or thirteenth century; I may refer to the Madonna and Saints by Pietro di Giovanni, or Lianoris, painted in 1453,* and the Pietà by Michele di Matteo, in 1468—productions that would disgrace the vilest dauber of the school of Giotto. In the paintings of Michele the influence of the Ferrarese branch of the school of Squarcione is also visible, and this is especially the case in a picture in the Academy at Venice, representing the Virgin adoring the child, with attendant Saints; the colouring of the flesh is as pale as Galasso's, and almost suggests a connection between the two artists,—that of the drapery, on the contrary, is bright and warm, with a

* His earliest known works are in 1415. There is a fresco of the Trinity, signed with his name, in the cloister of S. Domenico,—very poor indeed.

preponderance of blue, causing the faces to look quite ghastly. The heads are very weak and feeble, the drawing is atrocious, and Michele was conscious of it, for he studiously conceals the feet of his figures; in one place only the toes peep out, so claw-like as to suggest a spirit of darkness rather than light in the fair Saint they belong to. Singularly enough the small compositions on the predella, representing the history of the Invention of the Cross, are much superior to the upper part of the picture.*

Pausing therefore in the midst of the fifteenth century, and looking mournfully round us, we feel as Mr. Greatheart might have done, if, starting in the morning with the Celestial City in view and Christiana and her children journeying promisingly at his side, he were to find himself all at once forsaken and alone, and all his efforts vain to reclaim his wayward companions into the path of progress and perfection. Bologna was filled at this period with foreign styles and foreign artists; the native succession had sunk quite into the background. Giovanni of Modena, Giovanni Martorelli of Milan, Luca of Peruxa, Pelori of Venice, the Beata Caterina Vigri and Galasso of Ferrara,† engrossed the

* These compositions have an especial resemblance to the style of the Ferrarese Cosme, or Cosimo Tura.

† Of these artists, Giovanni di Modena was employed on works of some extent (now destroyed) in 1420 and 1451. Two pictures by Martorelli, very inferior and exhibiting the Byzantine influence, are preserved in the Pinacoteca,—he was working for the convent of S. Michele in Bosco in 1437.—Two Ma-

patronage and the praise; one only of the native artists redeems their credit, Marco Zoppo, a man of talent and the painter of a very pleasing altar-piece, now in the sacristy of S. Clemente,* but a pupil of Squarcione of Padua, and therefore totally alienated from the primitive school in which we are at present interested.

SECTION 2.—*Frescoes, presumed to be by the ancient Bolognese School, at Parma.*

BIDDING adieu therefore for the present to the city of Bologna, and reverting to the close of the fourteenth century, let us transport ourselves to Parma—where certain frescoes have recently been uncovered, which I am strongly inclined to attribute to the succession of the artists who painted in S. Maria di Mezzaratta,

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donnas and a row of Saints by Luca di Peruxa,[a] signed and dated 1431 and 1457, inferior but with a certain dignity, still exist in the second chapel to the right in S. Petronio.—Two paintings by the Beata Caterina, both of them representing S. Ursula, are preserved, one in the public gallery at Venice, the other, painted in 1452, in the Pinacoteca at Bologna; the colouring is pale, and some of the heads of the kneeling virgins are pleasing,—she was born in 1413 and died in 1463.—And, lastly, Galasso, as already mentioned, completed the frescoes in S. Maria di Mezzaratta in 1462, according to the inscription and the date, formerly visible there as recorded by Longhi, *Passaggiere, &c.*, p. 366. But we shall speak further of Galasso under the school of Squarcione.

* Belonging to the Collegio di Spagna. From its size I should suppose it to have been originally the altarpiece of the Church.

[a] Probably Perugia, but he has no affinity with the Umbrian school.

if not, partly at least, to 'Jacobus' himself, in his maturer years. If wrong in my surmise, they must be ascribed to the descendants of the painters of the Baptistery in direct succession, and yet, except in Bologna, I am at a loss for the link necessary to connect the two extremities of the chain, the beginning and the end of the pedigree. At all events, this is the place where, if at all, I ought to describe them, and I am tempted to do so more fully than their intrinsic merit might perhaps warrant, by their interest in the history of art as the most important surviving relics of a school which unquestionably existed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, distinct from those of Giotto and Siena, yet equally descended from the common patriarch, Niccola Pisano, —a school respecting which we know but little, while the sources of information are remote and hidden from our view. You will not therefore mistake me:—Like the ruins of Petra, (for the parallel with Edom will still hold good,) they have only just been restored to view after centuries of concealment,—like the ruins of Petra, they are to be estimated as testimonies to the comparative civilization of the race that produced them rather than as models, in themselves, of art and excellence.

These frescoes decorate the walls of two chapels in the Cathedral of Parma, the fifth to the left and the fourth to the right, as you advance from the Western entrance. The architecture in both is Gothic, and the paintings to all appearance contemporary with the architecture.

Entering the former, and glancing at the paintings on the suffit of the arch of access, and the compartments on the vault, too distant for minute inspection, but which appear to be original and novel in composition,* we may commence with the legend of S. Andrew as depicted on the Western or left-hand wall, beginning with the highest compartment and descending in order to the inferior.

I. and II. The series opens with the calling of S. Peter and S. Andrew in the highest compartment, which has been much injured by damp, nor has the second wholly escaped,—it represents the successive incidents which led to the conversion of the Myrmidons. S. Matthew, preaching to that wild community, was seized, blinded and cast into prison; an angel of God appeared to S. Andrew, then apparently in Asia Minor, and commanded him to go down to the sea-shore; he there found a boat, which spontaneously conveyed him to the town where S. Matthew was confined; the Apostles prayed together, and immediately the earth quaked, a light shone in the dungeon, S. Matthew recovered his sight, his chains broke, and they found themselves at liberty. S. Andrew forthwith preached to the natives; they seized, tied his feet and dragged him through the city, till his blood stained the streets,—but the

* They represent, 1. The Repulse of S. Joachim; 2. The Annunciation to S. Joachim in the Desert; 3. The Meeting of S. Joachim and S. Anna; 4. The Birth of the Virgin; 5. Her Dedication; 6. Her Marriage; 7. Her Annunciation; 8. The Nativity.

Apostle lifted up his voice to God, and a mysterious terror suddenly grasped the hearts of all the inhabitants of Myrmidonia; they set him at liberty, threw themselves at his feet, besought his instruction and received baptism,—and S. Andrew returned to his place.*—The imprisonment of S. Matthew, the apparition of the angel, the voyage of S. Andrew, his interview with his brother Apostle, and his cruel treatment by the Myrmidons, are all represented in distinct groups in this composition.

III. The third compartment includes two distinct histories.—Exous, a noble youth of Thessalonica, had been converted by the preaching of S. Andrew, —he abandoned his home to become his disciple; his relations found him with the Apostle at Philippi; he refused to return with them; to compel his submission they set fire to the house at night, but Exous, by command of S. Andrew, poured the contents of a small vial of water on the flames and thus extinguished them, and when the assailants attempted to scale the house with ladders they were struck with blindness. The whole company were converted by the miracle, with the exception of the parents of Exous, who died fifty days afterwards in obduracy.—

* I have found this legend nowhere except in the second book of the 'Historia Ecclesiastica,' more correctly the History of Normandy, by Ordericus Vitalis. He quotes as his authority a "libellus," or treatise, in his possession, of unknown antiquity, treating of the merits of S. Andrew. The remainder of the legend, as extracted from this "libellus," is nearly parallel to the usual accounts in Simeon Metaphrastes, Peter de Natalibus, the Golden Legend, &c.

The extinction of the flames, the escalade, and the baptism of the new proselytes are represented with much spirit on the left side of the compartment. The remainder is occupied with the story of Sostratus, a young Christian who took refuge with the Apostle to avoid the unnatural importunities of his mother; she accused him to the proconsul of the crime she had urged him to commit; the youth held his peace; S. Andrew vindicated him and denounced the mother, but in vain; the proconsul ordered Sostratus to be shut up in a sack and thrown into the river, the usual punishment of parricides; S. Andrew appealed to God by prayer — an earthquake took place, and a thunder-bolt fell, killing the mother and hurling the proconsul from his seat; he threw himself at the feet of the Apostle and besought his intercession; S. Andrew prayed once more—the tempest stilled, and the proconsul believed and was baptized with his whole family.

IV. Passing through Nice, the inhabitants complained to S. Andrew that seven devils lurked in the tombs to the right and left of the high road which led to their city, flinging stones and maltreating all who approached it. He preached Christ, and they believed his words, even without the testimony of a miracle; he then performed one by causing the devils to appear in the shape of dogs, and banishing them to the dry places of the wilderness. Shortly afterwards, however, arriving at Nicomedia, he met at the gate of the city the funeral of a young man who had been slain, as the natives informed him, by

seven dogs, which suddenly rushed into his apartment and worried him,—they were the seven devils of Nice; S. Andrew prayed to God, and bade the youth arise in the name of Christ; he revived, and believed in the name of salvation.—The death and resuscitation are represented in the background to the left of this compartment. The remainder is filled with the adventures of forty men who had sailed from Macedon in the hope of instruction in Christianity, but were shipwrecked and drowned in a storm raised by devils. S. Andrew was preaching on the sea-shore at Patras, when a dead man, one of the forty, was thrown out at his feet; he prayed, and restored him to life,—the man told his story and besought a similar favour for his companions; S. Andrew prayed once more, and the obsequious waves ejected the remaining thirty-nine; the Apostle restored them all to life, preached to, converted and baptized them. Among the incidents of this legend represented in the fresco, you will notice the devil, sitting complacently coiled up on the prow of the vessel, and the attentive audience at the extreme right of the compartment, where S. Andrew preaches to a whole sea of eyes and noses arrayed before, and gazing up at him.

v. The fifth and lowest compartment represents, to the left, the discomfiture of the devil, who had attempted to beguile a bishop in the disguise of a young lady, S. Andrew frustrating the plot by warning the prelate in the shape of a pilgrim; the vanquished demon is of human form, as in the old

mosaics,—to the right, the Crucifixion of the Apostle by Ægeus, the proconsul of Achaia, on his refusal to sacrifice; he preached from his cross, the people were touched with compassion and rushed tumultuously to the palace demanding his release; Ægeus, terrified, hurried to the place, and ordered the executioners to take him down, but every effort was in vain, their arms stiffened in the attempt; S. Andrew prayed, and a sudden glory, dazzling the eyes, shone round about him for half an hour, at the end of which time he expired and the glory disappeared. Ægeus at the same moment was seized by the devil and died on the spot. — The painter has represented the Apostle crucified with his head downwards, on what authority I know not. The proconsul is seen falling from his horse below.

Within the recess of the window, the history of S. Catherine is represented in nine smaller compartments, five to the left, four to the right of the altar. You will easily recognise the successive incidents of the history,* and in truth, they are scarcely worth

* The scenes are as follows:—I, (*to the left of the window,*) 1. S. Catherine kneeling and being crowned, much destroyed; 2. Her visit to the hermit, her vision of Our Saviour and his mother, and her reproval of the Emperor; 3. Her Dispute with the Doctors; 4. Her arrival at the prison, speaking with a sweet smile to Porphyrius, Captain of the host, as she enters,—and the Emperor's reception of letters demanding his presence elsewhere; 5. S. Catherine visited in her prison, and her interview with the Emperor after his return.—II, (*to the right of the window,*) 1. Destroyed; 2. S. Catherine's exposure to the wheels; 3. Half-destroyed, but apparently the execution of the soldiers; 4. (to the left of a niche containing a Pietà, the dead body of Our Saviour slashed all over with wounds,) her decapi-

minute examination except the last, representing the burial of the Saint by angels on the summit of Mount Sinai,—a hermit stands below at the mouth of his cave, pointing upwards to the tomb, as if in answer to the enquiries of some pilgrims who are ascending the mountain in order to pay their devotions there. These figures strongly resemble those in the paintings of Pietro di Lorenzo and Orcagna.

The frescoes on the remaining wall, opposite to the history of S. Andrew, represent the legend of S. Christopher. The highest is (as usual) much spoilt,—it seems to represent either his attendance at court or his rencontre with the devil; in the second he is seen standing beside the river,—a number of travellers are approaching on the left bank, and either the same or another party are repeated on the right, proceeding on their journey after transportation; in the third, he carries over Our Saviour as a child, and is then seen kneeling and gazing after him, as he ascends to heaven surrounded by cherubim, while the staff in his hand roots itself and shoots into a palm-tree,—further on he preaches at Ammon, and is lastly brought bound before King Dagnus; the fourth represents the conversion of the two women sent to tempt him, and the various torments to which he was afterwards subjected,—while in the fifth and last, the archers shoot at him, but the arrows turn aside or remain suspended in the air, while the

tation, angels sitting in a row in front, looking on,—and to the right, her body laid by angels in a tomb on the summit of Mount Sinai.

one shot by the King turns round, flies back and hits him in the right eye,—the Saint is then beheaded, angels carry the soul to heaven, an attendant gathers the blood, which the martyr had warned the King could alone restore his sight, and finally, in the upper story of the palace, at the right extremity of the fresco, the blood is applied to the injured eye, and in the lower, the King receives baptism. The funeral service of the Saint is also represented on the adjacent strip of wall, forming the pier of the arch of entrance.

There is much expression in these frescoes, some of the accessary figures are very good, the heads evince the study of nature,—there is even an attempt, though very rude, at anatomy; the foreshortenings are bold, and strongly resemble those by 'Jacobus' at S. Maria di Mezzaratta, and the colouring is equally vivid and warm.* On the other hand,

* The Signor Enrico Scarabelli, author of a Description of this chapel, after noticing the abuse by the painter of vermillion and red earths, lavished everywhere, observes that his colours are in general choice and brilliant, but his greens have suffered and the azures disappeared, although originally very vivid. Some of his yellows are still most brilliant,—the blacks and white lead are too strongly opposed to the adjacent colours, but this may be the effect of time. He exhibits no great variety of tints, using for the most part virgin colours, while, if mixed, red or yellow is sure to dominate. He made little use of the *graffito*,* pricking in his design by preference with charcoal. He did little in pure fresco, ("a buon fresco,") finishing for the most part in tempera. The gildings, he adds, could not be better executed now.

* The trowel or tool for outlining the design on the wet plaster.

the composition is not so original, the impress of Niccola Pisano is weaker, at least in its objectionable tendencies, and I could imagine just so much intercourse with the school of Siena as to enlighten and guide the artist without compromising his nationality.*

Let us now cross the church to the fourth chapel on the right hand of the nave similarly decorated with frescoes representing the life of S. Sebastian, works, I think, of the same school, although of higher excellence.

Instead of five, there are three compartments only, but of proportionately larger size, on the opposite walls,—those on the right and left of the altar have been entirely destroyed. The series begins, as usual, on the left-hand wall.

I and II.—S. Sebastian was born of noble parents at Narbonne, but brought up at Milan, to which his family originally belonged. He entered the army and rose to high command, and was much trusted by the Emperors Diocletian and Maximian. Converted at Rome, he concealed his religion in order that he might assist his fellow Christians without suspicion,

* Signor E. Scarabelli considers the chapel to have been built and the frescoes painted for Cristofano Valeri and his son Andrea, Counts of Baganzola, and proprietors of the chapel, as late as the middle of the fifteenth century, inferring this from the exile of the family during many years preceding that period. But as he informs us that Cristofano received Pandolfo Malatesta as his guest at Parma in 1403 and 1417, one does not, in the absence of proof to the contrary, see why the chapel might not have been completed before the exile. And this is the more probable from the architecture in the frescoes being Gothic and not Cinquecento.

by visiting the prisons, exhorting them in temptation, and acting in all respects as a most efficient ally to the clergy. Marcus and Marcellianus, sons of Tranquillinus, a noble Roman, were converted by him; refusing to sacrifice, they were condemned to death by the prefect Chromatius, who granted them however a respite of thirty days, in hopes of their ultimate compliance; they were committed to the custody of an officer of state, named Nicostratus. Their parents, Tranquillinus and Marcia, of whom the former was blind, the latter dumb, with a large company of their relations, assembled at the house of Nicostratus, and used every effort to persuade them to sacrifice; their hearts began to soften, their resolution to give way, when Sebastian stepped forward, filled with divine enthusiasm, and preached Christ to the assembled company, and to the youths constancy in their profession, and contempt of the present in the anticipation of a future life of glory; while speaking, a light from heaven encircled him, and a youth in raiment bright as the sun was seen standing beside him, so that all that heard him were astonished and received the vision as confirmatory of his doctrine. Zoe, wife of Nicostratus, who had lost her speech, now came forward, and kneeling at the feet of S. Sebastian, besought his intercession by mute gesticulation—her tongue was miraculously loosed, and she declared that an angel had stood before her, surrounded by light, and shewn her a book in which all that Sebastian had said was written. On this Nicostratus, Tranquillinus and Marcia pro-

fessed themselves converts. Nicostratus immediately released from prison and brought to his own house all who were in the public gaol; S. Sebastian preached to them, and with fasting and prayer, they all prepared themselves for baptism. The prefect Chromatius, hearing of these proceedings, sent for Nicostratus and upbraided him; Nicostratus excused himself by asserting that he had sent for the prisoners merely to deter them from the adoption of Christianity by the sight of the tortures he had prepared for the Christians. Returning with the prefect's messenger, Claudius, he spoke to him of S. Sebastian and of the new faith; Claudius too expressed a wish for baptism, and brought his two infirm sons to the house of congregation, where the presbyter Polycarp shortly afterwards baptized the whole assembly.— Such is the opening of the legend; the partial destruction of the uppermost compartment, and the multiplicity of details, render it rather difficult to assign the correct interpretation to each separate representation in it and in the fresco immediately beneath; the most prominent would seem to be the Investiture of S. Sebastian in his military command, his Conversion of the two young Saints, his Exhortation to them in prison, his Address to the weeping relatives in the house of Nicostratus, and their Baptism.

III. The thirty days having elapsed, the prefect sent for Tranquillinus to enquire whether his sons would sacrifice. Tranquillinus confessed himself a Christian, spoke of S. Sebastian and preached Chris-

tianity to him, adding that his sight had been restored at his baptism. Chromatius, who was himself confined to his bed by illness, was struck by this; he desired him to bring Sebastian and entreat him to work his cure. Sebastian and the presbyter Polycarp came accordingly, and the former declared that Christ would heal him if he renounced the Gods, and gave him licence to destroy their images; he consented, although reluctantly, and Polycarp and Sebastian forthwith destroyed two hundred of them. But the prefect did not recover, and Sebastian saw that he had reserved some idol in his heart. Chromatius then confessed that he had in a secret chamber an astrolabe, an instrument exceeding rich and precious, indicating the motions of the stars and heavens, and by which he foresaw the future; they urged him to destroy it; his son, Tiburtius, objected, refusing to sanction the destruction of a work so exquisite, unless Sebastian and Polycarp would pledge themselves to enter two burning ovens if his father did not recover. They agreed to his conditions; Tiburtius broke the astrolabe, and at that very moment an angel appeared to the prefect and raised him up in bed, perfectly restored, whereupon the father and the son, and their whole family, believed and received baptism.—Turning to the fresco, we observe the palace of the prefect to the left, filling above half the compartment, the upper and lower stories filled with figures,—in the first room of the lower story is represented Sebastian's first interview with the prefect,—in the background, to the right of the palace, the

subsequent destruction of the idols,—in the second room of the lower story, the second interview, and in the chamber immediately above it, in the upper story, the destruction of the astrolabe, represented as a triangle within a luminous sphere, by Tiburtius in the presence of Sebastian and Polycarp; to the right again of the palace, but in the foreground, the slaves heating the two ovens, and in the third room of the lower story, the apparition of the angel and cure of the prefect,—and finally, to the right of the compartment, in front of a large building of Gothic architecture, the baptism of nine naked figures, closely packed in a large *tazza* or vase, and over whom Polycarp seems to be squeezing a spunge.

Such were the conquests of the Gospel, such the triumphs of S. Sebastian, linking the highest with the lowest before the mercy-seat of God, the robber from the dungeon with the representative of Imperial Majesty on the Palatine. But the scene was about to change, and for the sequel of the drama we must look to the three compartments on the opposite or right-hand wall of the chapel. At this juncture the flame of persecution revived, Chromatius resigned his prefecture, and Fabian, a rigid adherent to the elder worship, was appointed in his stead. Sebastian still continued unsuspected and in high favour, and was promoted to the command of a company of the Prætorian Guards. Chromatius retired into the country, carrying a number of the converts with him; Polycarp and Sebastian, burning for martyrdom, eagerly disputed which should accompany this

little band to complete their instruction, and which remain behind to encourage and fortify the martyrs in their expected sufferings; it was referred to the Pope, Caius, who assigned the latter duty, the post of honour, to Sebastian.

I and II. It was in the year of Our Lord 286; the missionaries of evil were abroad; the Pope, with his immediate attendants, lay concealed in the chambers of one Castulus, a Christian officer, in the Imperial Palace. One by one, the whole of the group of converts were discovered and martyred. The first apprehended was Zoe, in praying at the tomb of S. Peter,—she was stifled in smoke. Tranquillinus, ashamed to be less courageous than a woman, went to pray at the tomb of S. Paul,—he was stoned. The death of Nicostratus followed,—he was thrown into the sea. Tiburtius was the next victim; a young man having been killed by a fall, he had restored him to life by intercession with Christ, and the result was the conversion of the youth and of his family, and their baptism by Pope Caius. Tiburtius was discovered soon afterwards praying with the Pope, and brought before the prefect, Fabian; the latter commanded a fire to be made on the ground, and bade him either throw frankincense on it in honour of the Gods, or walk upon it; he chose the latter, and invoking the name of Christ, remained unhurt. He was then taken out of the city into the Via Labicana, and beheaded. Finally Marcus and Marcellianus, the sons of Tranquillinus, were nailed by the feet to two posts, and after a day and night, during

which they continually sang hymns to God, they were despatched with spears, and buried in the Via Ardeatina.—Of these incidents, the martyrdom of Tranquillinus, the resuscitation of the dead youth by Tiburtius, and the exposure of the latter to the flames, are represented in the first or uppermost compartment; his decapitation and the martyrdom of the two young Saints at the beginning of the second; the remainder of the wall is taken up with the sequel of S. Sebastian's history.

II and III. By this time his heroic duplicity had become known to the Emperor, who summoned him to his presence, and after bitterly reproaching him with treachery and ingratitude, sentenced him to be shot to death by the Mauritanian archers; he was left for dead, pierced with arrows, but Irene, the widow of Castulus, (who had also been martyred,) removing the supposed corpse for burial, discovered that he was still alive, and took him to her lodgings, where he in time recovered. He refused, however, to escape, and soon afterwards, planting himself on the stairs of Heliogabalus, while the Emperors passed by, began to reprove them with a loud voice for their unjust persecution of the Church of Christ; they ordered him to be taken into the Hippodrome of the palace and beaten to death with clubs, and the body to be thrown into the *cloaca* or common sewer, lest his relics should be worshipped by the Christians. These orders were obeyed to the letter, but the Saint appeared in a vision to a pious matron named Lucina, and revealed to her where the corpse lay, com-

manding her to bury it in the catacomb which still bears his name, and at the feet of the Apostles,—all which was done as he desired.—These several incidents are depicted in the remaining half of the second compartment, and in the third, below it; in the former are seen his impeachment before the Emperors, the archers shooting at him, and his tendance in the widow's house,—in the latter, his reproval of the Emperors, (though in their palace instead of the street,) his second martyrdom, the contemptuous disposal of his remains, their recovery by Lucina, and finally, his funeral rites,—the lid of the sarcophagus is half slued aside, discovering three bodies, pure and incorrupt, within, while several deformed persons kneel at the foot, and at the head a bishop, followed by a train of ecclesiastics issuing from a monastery performs the service,*—this closing scene is represented in the corner in the uppermost angle of the compartment.

Altogether they form a very interesting series. Their peculiar merit consists in the conception of the character of S. Sebastian, not as a hot enthusiastic youth, the fond fancy of later painters, but as a matured man, circumspect and wary while caution can advance his purpose, but resolute as a lion when it becomes necessary to throw off disguise. I do not apologise for the character, but it is one naturally

* Unless indeed this represent the sepulture of his relics with those of S. Gregory and S. Medand, many centuries afterwards, in the church of the latter Saint at Soissons.

generated in seasons of unregulated zeal and religious persecution. Many of the scenes in which he is introduced by the painter are well composed, his air and attitude full of dignity, and even his face of expression,—the accessary figures are sometimes extremely good, the foreshortenings are less numerous and less bold than in the chapel of the Valeri family, and there is perhaps less individuality upon the whole in the figures; on the other hand, the architecture is richer and the assignation of the different incidents of the story to different localities of the same building is ingenious, and reminds one of the similar arrangement in the frescoes of the chapel of S. George at Padua. The colouring, though less brilliant, is still that of the ancient frescoes of S. Maria di Mezzaratta,—the general style, though much more advanced, still preserves the resemblance; and here, as in the chapel opposite, (though unquestionably by different painters,) various trifles, vague, subtle and evanescent when sought to be reduced into argument —mere nothings in controversy, yet not the less cogent in conviction—impress me with the belief that Siena has directly or indirectly contributed to the improvement more than Florence.—In a word, and by way of recapitulation, I should say that the artists who painted these two chapels were neither Giottesque nor Sienese, although akin to the latter rather than the former school,—that they betray a marked affinity, in style and colouring, with the works of the early painters of Bologna, sprung, like those of Tuscany, from Niccola Pisano, although by

a distinct line of descent,—that no other school, so characterised, being known to have existed in Lombardy, they must be presumed to have belonged to it,—that the date of these frescoes falls to be determined by the style of the architecture introduced in them, which is uniformly Italian-Gothic of the close of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth century, exclusive of the Cinquecento, while the costumes* and the Gothic letters of the inscriptions support this inference,—and that finally, from all these considerations, there is at least no extrinsic improbability in the supposition that they may be by the succession of 'Jacobus,' if not, in part at least, by that artist himself:—Further than this I dare not venture, and even as it is, I feel that I may have gone too far; the theory of the amateur is often a mere spider's web, ingeniously woven and glittering in the sun, and sufficient to catch and compel the submission of flies as delicate as itself, but frail withal and easily broken through by that buzzing blue-bottle, the practical connoisseur, the only ultimate authority in questions of pure technicality like this. With our best bow therefore, and in all courtesy and kindness, we take leave for the present of the city of Correggio —and of her of the colonnades, of the Pepoli and the Bentivoglios.

* Singularly enough, almost exact parallels to the cocked hats of last century are worn by the attendants standing outside the Imperial Palace, in the last compartment of the history of S. Sebastian. And in the one immediately preceding it, three horsemen riding up from the left wear caps very much resembling the hats of our present fashion, although lower in the crown.

CHRISTIAN ART OF MODERN EUROPE.

PERIOD I.

ARCHITECTURE.

Development of the Christian Element, Spirit—Lombard and Gothic, or Pointed Architecture—Rise of Sculpture and Painting—Expression.

VIII. SCULPTURE AND PAINTING NORTH OF THE ALPS, IN CONNEXION WITH LOMBARD AND GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE—SCHOOLS OF THE NETHERLANDS AND OF GERMANY—PREPARATION FOR THE GREAT STRUGGLE OF THE FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

PART I. EARLY SCULPTURE AND PAINTING NORTH OF THE ALPS.

SECT. 1. *Sculpture.*

SECT. 2. *Traces of the Primitive Roman School of Painting, North of the Alps.*

SECT. 3. *Painting—School of Cologne.*

PART II. SCHOOL OF VAN EYCK, OR OF THE NETHERLANDS.

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SECT. 2. *Hans Memling.*

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PART III.

PART III. SCHOOLS OF UPPER GERMANY.

SECT. 1. *Predecessors of Albert Dürer.*
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SECT. 5. *Influence of Teutonic on Italian Painting—and Conclusion.*

LETTER VIII.

SCULPTURE AND PAINTING NORTH OF THE ALPS,

IN CONNEXION WITH LOMBARD AND GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE.

SCHOOLS OF THE NETHERLANDS AND OF GERMANY —PREPARATION FOR THE GREAT STRUGGLE OF THE FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

And now, to complete our survey of Christian Art during its First and peculiarly Spiritual period, it remains for me to trace the history of Sculpture and Painting, as developed in connection with Lombard and Gothic Architecture, North of the Alps,—a development springing in the first instance, more especially as regards Sculpture, from the influence of the antique through Niccola Pisano, but which gradually after the impulse had once been communicated, lost that impress, and devoted itself, especially in painting, to the direct and unmodified imitation of Nature,—a development, therefore, distinct in purpose and attainment from that which took place in the South, and yet necessarily to be noticed here,

from the influence it exerted, more or less, upon every school of Italy during the Second and succeeding periods of European Art—itself belonging, let me again emphatically repeat, to the First, in virtue of its purely Christian inspiration and its affinity with Gothic architecture, as opposed to the Classic and Pagan sympathies of the Cinquecento. You will presently see why I lay so much stress on this point. Owing to nearly a century having elapsed before the style and principles of the Cinquecento made their appearance in Northern Europe, and in consequence of the unresisting and slavish submission which greeted them when they did arrive, I shall be obliged to anticipate the names of many Italian painters long posterior to Masaccio, Uccello and Verrocchio, as either imitators or instructors of Flemish and German artists, their contemporaries in actual date, but by intellectual computation their grandfathers or grand-children. But this inconvenience is incidental and unavoidable, and indeed of little consequence when once acknowledged and made allowance for; and I proceed without further apology to the theme before me,—a copious and intricate one, but I will be as brief as I consistently can in dealing with it.

PART I.

EARLY SCULPTURE AND PAINTING NORTH OF THE ALPS.

SECTION I.—*Sculpture.*

SCULPTURE, in the North as in theSouth of Europe, falls naturally into three styles,—the First, early and very rude, exhibiting the monsters and grotesques of Scandinavia and Persepolis—the Second, characterised by a somewhat improved design, by the adoption of the Byzantine compositions, and by attempts at the narrative and dramatic bas-relief—the Third, far superior in every respect, and revealing the influence (at first) of Classic models,—the First of these styles corresponding to the Early Lombard architecture of Italy, and to the sculpture which we have already become familiar with at Pavia and Verona—the Second, to the Later or Florid Lombard, and to the sculpture at Modena, Ferrara, Pisa and Parma, during the Semi-Byzantine revival—the Third, to the Italian or Tuscan-Gothic architecture, and the bas-reliefs and sculpture of Niccola, Giovanni and Andrea Pisano, Orcagna, and their followers. Each of these three styles appears to have arisen first in Italy, in close connection with its correspondent and elder sister in architecture, and to have been thence carried to the North,—the natural course when we reflect how peculiarly sculpture depends on ancient examples for improvement.—But here it must be

remembered that, while Lombard architecture, both in its Earlier and Later or Florid style, originated in Italy, it was the former only, the Early Lombard, which crossed the Alps, Early Gothic having developed itself in the North and preoccupied the ground almost at the very moment when the Later Lombard sprang to life in the South,—nor was it till the Gothic had reached its second stage, its Complete or Decorated form, in Germany, France and England, that the variety commonly distinguished as Tuscan appeared in Italy. Hence the second of the styles of sculpture above enumerated, the Semi-Byzantine, which in Italy answers to the Later or Florid Lombard architecture, will in the North be found attached to the Early Gothic, the Florid Lombard and Early Gothic being contemporary,—a consideration of importance as checking the hasty but at first sight natural supposition, that an earlier style of sculpture is usually associated with a later style of architecture North of the Alps.*

* To a certain and limited extent, indeed, this is true—since the impulse of genius on Art being always felt first in Architecture, and not in Sculpture till after a certain interval, the sculptors flourishing during the wane and at the fall of each successive style of architecture naturally found employment under its successors during the interval in question,—that is, till the new impulse had extended to sculpture also, and a younger and abler race had grown up to supersede them. Nor should it be overlooked that adherents of schools that have passed away are constantly found lingering on, unwilling or unable to change with the times, exactly as we have noticed in the sister art of Painting.—With these limitations, the classification attempted in the text will be found, I think, intelligible and convenient.

Of the first of these three classes of sculpture, the most interesting specimens exist, I believe, in Normandy and England. Several of the oldest churches both here and in the North of France present the grotesque and monstrous imagery with an exuberance and fire little less remarkable than in the case of the bas-reliefs of S. Michele at Pavia. I may specify the porch of S. Margaret's, York, in which many of the devices appear to be precisely the same, and the sculptures of S. Georges de Bocherville, and of the adjacent Chapter-house, between Rouen and Jumieges—all three erected shortly after the Conquest.* At the same time, the similarity may partly be accounted for by the common Scandinavian and Medo-Persian origin of the Lombard and Norman races, although with the lapse of several hundred years between their respective migrations, and by their resemblance in character, alike delighting in warfare and the chace, alike exulting in antagonism with obstacles—life alike to the dead, and the destined regenerators of society wherever the winds of heaven bore them. The double fringe of eagles, lions, centaurs and other monsters, either chased by hunters or fighting and devouring each other, which adorns the tapestry of Bayeux, worked by Queen Matilda, forms in this point of view a sort of running

* For the porch of S. Margaret's see Carter's 'Specimens of Ancient Sculpture and Painting in England,' *Sir S. Meyrick's edition*, pl. 103, and for the sculptures of S. Georges, Mr. Dawson Turner's 'Tour in Normandy,' tom. ii, pp. 7 sqq.—and Dr. Whewell's 'Architectural Notes,' p. 279.

symbolic commentary on the character of the warriors whose exploit it commemorates—no less than the Norman invasion and conquest of England.*—This grotesque imagery gradually retires from view during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as the Second and more ambitious attempts at historical bas-relief came in with the Early Gothic architecture.†

Of this Second and more elaborate style of sculpture specimens are numerous in England; the bas-reliefs of the West front of the Cathedral at Wells, those of Ely, and the frieze in the chapel of Edward the Confessor in Westminster Abbey, representing his legendary history, may serve as examples; they are still rude in composition and design, though occasionally (and especially at Wells) graceful in feeling. But the most remarkable relics of this era are the statues in the three porches of the Cathedral at Chartres, a most interesting edifice, which happily escaped the iconoclasm of the Revolution through the device of the Mayor, who persuaded the mob to dedicate it to the Goddess of Reason; everything consequently is in perfect preservation—not a head

* This most interesting relic has been engraved several times both in England and abroad. The best edition is that by M. Jubinal, in association with various other ancient tapestries.

† Its spirit may be said still to survive in the grotesque sculptures and images constantly found lurking in the obscure angles of columns, in the carvings of capitals, stalls, &c., throughout the reign of Gothic Architecture,—directing itself for the most part in satire against the monastic orders, the constant butt both of the clergy and the laity. Satire is the earliest expression of the reasoning or analytical principle in Art, as in Literature.

knocked off, not a minaret torn down; the statues have much dignity and character, although stiff and uncouth, with their drapery swathed tightly round them, a characteristic of the style,—their general aspect is very Byzantine, while the long flowing hair of the queens and princesses, the cherished badge of freedom and nobility among the Franks and Teutons, as forcibly recalls their Northern origin.* These statues, together with the sculptures, allegorical and historical, which figure over the doors, representing the zodiac, the occupations of the different months, the lives of the Virgin, S. Martin, &c., might be compared, in point of date and character, to those of Biduino and Bonanno at Pisa, and with still closer resemblance to those of Benedetto degli Antelami at Parma.

The step from this to the sculpture of the Third period, corresponding to the Complete or Decorated Gothic of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, was a stride as in Italy, but less astonishing, as the improvement seems due, in part at least, to Niccola Pisano, constant intercourse being then kept up with Italy. Nevertheless I have as little doubt that a distinct impulse was given by some man of genius in the North, independent of that from Italy, although it would have availed little without it—and to this impulse we may attribute the peculiar droop of the head and the wavy curve of the body which so con-

* Statues of the same period and nearly the same character may be seen flanking the Western and Northern portals of S. Denis.

stantly occur, not merely in the female but the male figures of the Northern sculptors,—reflecting, it would appear, that sentiment of love and gentleness, of courtesy and deference which neither Greece nor Rome ever dreamed of, and which it was reserved for Christianity to awaken and reveal through her handmaid Chivalry.*

In other respects the sculpture of this period bears visible marks of Classic influence; the attitudes are freer and more dignified, the proportions more correct, while the face is generally full, as in the works of the later Semi-Byzantine succession, both in Sculpture and Painting, in Italy,—I cannot say that there is much or very elevated expression, or that a mastery and individuality akin to that of the great Italian sculptors is recognisable in the North, previous at least to the very close of the period we are now considering; on the contrary, excellent as much of its sculpture is, few traces are discoverable of original genius, the ideas have too much the appearance of being second-hand, and the execution that of a job done to order. Perhaps the tombs of the royal family in the vaults of S. Denis deserve this censure the least. Many of them are singularly beautiful; grace, sweetness, and majesty characterise the re-

* The wavy curve occurs in the Madonnas of Niccola Pisano and his school, and the droop of the head in those of the Byzantines and Sienese, but rarely or never in their male figures of every-day life, as in the North. The Scottish proverb, "The nobler the heart, the suppler the neck," is purely Teutonic and chivalric in its sentiment.

cumbent forms, mingled with a strong expression of piety, and a peculiar repose and stillness, as if they had survived all human passions and interests; the draperies are long, flowing, and fearlessly straight,—few of them are older than the reign of S. Louis, which witnessed a rapid development of the art in France. No regular line of succession appears to have existed there, but from the thirteenth to the beginning of the sixteenth century sculptors innumerable figure in every district between the British channel and the gulf of Lyons, gradually however degenerating till the introduction of the Cinquecento taste. Among their latest works, I may mention the sculptured history of the Virgin and our Saviour in the Cathedral at Chartres, commenced in 1514 by Jean Texier de Beauce, a most elaborate performance, surmounted by minarets and filagree-work most minutely and delicately carved in the richest Gothic fashion,*—and the sculptures on the façade and in the court of the Hotel de Bourgtheroulde at Rouen, the former, of the close of the fifteenth century, representing the occupations of the various seasons of the year, the latter peculiarly interesting as representing the Meeting at the Field of Cloth of Gold between Francis I. and Henry VIII., in 1520.† The architecture of the Hotel itself, as picturesque

* The compositions are enumerated by M. Gilbert in his excellent description of the Cathedral. They will be found on the outer wall of the choir, within the Church.

† See M. Delaquérière's interesting 'Description Historique des Maisons de Rouen,' 2 tom. 8vo, 1841.

as it is corrupt, bears witness to the struggle then commencing in France between the elder and the new Architecture, the pointed and the horizontal principle.*

Crossing over to England, we seldom find such beauty as in some of the tombs of S. Denis, but with less grace there is generally even more dignity. Assistance from Italy seems to have been soon dispensed with; English sculptors appear under the reign of Henry III., and though the tomb of that monarch in Westminster Abbey be of Italian workmanship, and Peter, a citizen of Rome, and supposed by some to have been identical with Pietro Cavallini, was employed in 1280 to finish the tomb of Edward the Confessor,† the effigies of Henry III. and of Eleanor, Queen of Edward I., also in the Abbey, are by an Englishman, William Torel, and the statues on the crosses erected by Edward I. to her memory on the spots where her bier had rested during its progress to Westminster, were similarly of native workmanship. Sculpture from henceforth flourished in England; Edward III. was an especial patron of the art; bishops and chapters vied with

* The Picturesque in Art answers to the Romantic in Poetry; both stand opposed to the Classic or formal school,—both may be defined as the triumph of Nature over Art, luxuriating in the decay, not of her elemental and everlasting beauty, but of the bonds by which she had been enthralled by man. It is only in ruin, that a building of pure architecture, whether Greek or Gothic, becomes Picturesque.

† *Monumenta Vetusta*, tom. vi, p. 17; *Carter's Ancient Sculpture and Painting in England*, p. 72.

each other in decorating their churches, and this lasted during the whole of the fourteenth and the early years of the fifteenth century. The statues of the Kings and Queens on the screens in the Cathedrals of Canterbury and Exeter, the recumbent figures of Edward III. and of Queen Philippa in Westminster Abbey—the head of the former almost ideal in its beauty, the drapery in both flowing and free—the tomb of Henry V., also there, the series of Kings from the Conqueror to Henry V. in the Cathedral of York, the tomb of Richard Earl of Warwick in the interesting chapel of the Beauchamps—and many others—belong to this period.* But the reign of Henry VI. witnessed a change, and from the death of the hero of Agincourt downwards the art declined, till Henry VIII. introduced the Italian style of the Cinquecento. The dying efforts of Gothic sculpture in England may be seen in the bas-reliefs of Henry VII.'s chapel in Westminster Abbey, in close juxta-position with the tomb of that monarch, executed by Torregiano, the fellow-student of Michael Angelo.†

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* The series of funeral Brasses too, dating in England from the close of the thirteenth century, is very interesting, although belonging to a distinct department of art, resembling engraving rather than sculpture. Sometimes they exhibit outlines as graceful, free and unconstrained as if the brass had been wax and the graver the iron *stylus* of antiquity. The Cambridge Camden Society has published a very valuable collection of engravings of the old English Brasses. Unfortunately, however, many of the finest specimens must be considered of Flemish workmanship.

† Engravings of these, with an interesting commentary by

No distinct school or regular succession of sculptors can be traced in England during this lengthened period; they seem, as in France, to have lived and worked isolatedly and apart, drawing, as their sole bond of union, on a common stock of principles and traditions, partly native to the North, partly inherited from Italy. To this isolated position, rather than to the barbarism imputed to the wars of the roses, I should attribute the decadence. It is remarkable too, that a correspondent decline in architecture preceded that of sculpture, step by step, till it reached the depth of debasement, the *ne plus ultra* of vicious ornament; the Cinquecento merely replaced, or rather intruded on and modified a style which still vegetated on, though fallen into decrepitude and decay. This indeed was the case, not in England only, but in France and Germany—everywhere but in Italy. It has been imputed to the dissolution of the Freemasons, but I think unjustly; that dissolution was a consequence of the decline, not a cause. Like the Knights Templars, they had done their devoir and deserved their praise, but when the spirit had died out, when the time came that

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Mr. John Sidney Hawkins, may be seen in Carter's *Specimens, &c.*, p. 61, plates 51–55.—Flaxman's opening Lecture on English Sculpture will be found particularly interesting.—The arts in Scotland were influenced by intercourse with France rather than England, but the iconoclasm of the Reformation has left few specimens either of her architecture or sculpture. Melrose Abbey, Roslin chapel, the Cathedral of Kirkwall, &c. are among the most interesting relics of early Scottish art.

they could benefit society more in severance than in combination, they necessarily were broken up.

To Sculpture, indeed, Freemasonry had been unpropitious from the first; its effect was to subordinate the sculptor too much to the architect, to make the former a mere tool in the hand of the latter. The rapid intercommunication of every improvement in mechanical expedients and in their application was of incalculable advantage to Architecture, dependent as she is on the laws of matter, of harmony and adjustment, but the effect on Sculpture was to check individual exertion, to create a general average style of workmanship, above which there was neither inducement nor opportunity to soar. The social system, moreover, of the feudal states of Europe was unfavourable to her. The Freemasons indeed, as a body in the confidence of the Church, and numbering among their members and pupils a vast body of the clergy—to say nothing of their peculiar system of association and intercourse, which has been perpetuated to the present day—possessed power and vindicated respect; but even they were looked upon as mere mechanics,—how much more so their servants—for such they virtually were—the Sculptor and the Painter! Freedom in short, Civil Freedom is needed before Sculpture and Painting can rise to excellence and honour; the trade must become a profession, the artisan an artist,* the man of genius

* The Italian words 'scarpellino' and 'scultore' express the distinction too often confounded among ourselves, between the two ranks of stone-cutters.

must be independent, must respect himself, and have the opportunity of commanding the respect of others by fair and open competition, before his art can rise above the ground and bear him heavenward on its wings. This state of things was not to be expected either in France or England during the period we have now been dwelling upon; events of far higher importance to the pending and the future interests of humanity were there evolving themselves, and beyond the bold glance to heaven and the onward stride of thought and will expressed in Gothic architecture, art was less national than ecclesiastical; the defenders of Christendom against Mahomet, the asserters of the cause of Constitutional Government on the plains of Runnymede and under the banner of Simon de Montfort, took little interest in the quality of the sculpture and painting which adorned the porches, altars, and windows of their Cathedrals,—they fought for the Church, for the throne, for the sanctity of the poor man's hearth, and left such trifles to the clergy. It was for England especially a time of battling and bloodshed, stringing her sinews and bracing her nerves for the struggle she has maintained, and is still maintaining in these latter times, not for her own mere individual independence, but for Truth and Liberty as the heritage of mankind. Her voice is only beginning to be heard in Art—and in other matters too.

From these and other causes, Sculpture and Painting on the one hand and the Spirit of Chivalry on the other have usually flourished in an inverse ratio

one to the other, and it is not therefore in England, France, or Spain, but among the free cities of Italy and Germany that we must look for their rise, their propagation by continuous schools, and their improvement through the competition of independent artists in limited arenas before the eyes of their countrymen. We have found it so at Pisa and Siena, Florence and Bologna,—we may anticipate a similar spectacle at Cologne and Nuremberg, Bruges and Antwerp,—more or less so in fact wherever the conditions alluded to shall present themselves.

That two such schools flourished at Cologne and Nuremberg at a very early period, we have ample testimony. From the time of Charlemagne downwards, Cologne had enjoyed an undisputed pre-eminence among the cities of Germany, as the heart of the Holy Roman Empire, the Second Sun, the Rome of the North, the brain as it were of the pure unmixed Teutonic mind, as contradistinguished from that of the Latin or Ecclesiastical element of Europe. The intercourse consequently between her and Italy was as direct and constant as that between the Pope and the Emperor, and this was maintained as late as the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when she held a position of equal ascendancy as the centre and soul of the Hanseatic confederacy. During the whole of this period Cologne was the nest in which the arts sheltered themselves, as under the eagle's wing, till qualified to soar and seek settlement abroad. It was at Cologne that the Lombard Architecture was first established in the North, thence to be diffused

over Germany, France, and England—it was at Cologne that Gothic Architecture, the peculiar birth and expression of the Teutonic genius, reached its grandest development—it was there that Sculpture first alighted on her flight from Italy—and there too that Painting first unveiled herself, in virginal beauty, to the worship of the North. Of the names of her sculptors, the succession of her school, little indeed is known, but we are well assured of that school's existence; later generations have mutilated its works and neglected its memory, but relics of the former still exist, and the latter has revived with increased lustre since the discovery of the influence exerted by it over the sister art of painting, both at Cologne herself, and in a secondary degree throughout Germany and the Netherlands,—even Italy profited by it in her turn, and in Sculpture especially the Neapolitan branch of the school of Niccola Pisano would appear to have been directly its debtor. The Florentine Ghiberti gives a most interesting account of a sculptor of Cologne in the employment of Charles of Anjou, King of Naples, whose skill he parallels with that of the statuaries of ancient Greece; his heads, he says, and his design of the naked, were "maravigliosamente bene," his style full of grace, his sole defect the somewhat curtailed stature of his figures. He was no less excellent in minuter works as a goldsmith, and in that capacity had worked for his patron a "tavola d' oro," a tablet or screen (apparently) of gold, with his utmost care and skill; it was a work of exceeding beauty—but in some political

exigency his patron wanted money, and it was broken up before his eyes; seeing his labour vain and the pride of his heart rebuked, he threw himself on the ground, and uplifting his eyes and hands to heaven, prayed in contrition, "Lord God Almighty, Governor and Disposer of heaven and earth! thou hast opened mine eyes that I follow from henceforth none other than thee—Have mercy upon me!"—He forthwith gave all he had to the poor for the love of God, and went up into a mountain where there was a great hermitage, and dwelt there the rest of his days in penitence and sanctity, surviving down to the days of Pope Martin, who reigned from 1281 to 1284. "Certain youths," adds Ghiberti, "who sought to be skilled in statuary, told me how he was versed both in painting and sculpture, and how he had painted in the Romitorio where he lived; he was an excellent draughtsman and very courteous.* When the youths who wished to improve visited him, he received them with much humility, giving them learned instructions, showing them various proportions, and drawing for them many examples, for he was most accomplished in his art. And thus," he concludes, "with great humility, he ended his days in that hermitage."†

But it was reserved for Nuremberg to complete what Cologne had begun, to carry Sculpture to its highest perfection in Germany. After a long period

* "Docile," *orig.*

† See Ghiberti's 'Commentario,' *ap. Cicognara.*

of internal growth and preparation, she had acquired her liberties from the Electors of Brandenburg, commerce and riches rapidly flowed in upon her, and learning and the arts followed in their train. Sculpture appears to have flourished there as early as the close of the thirteenth century; the statues of Saints, then executed, to the right and left of the portal of the church of S. Lawrence are excellent, the attitudes graceful, the drapery flowing, with the peculiar wavy bend in the female and youthful forms, and the full features inherited from the Semi-Byzantine schools. The traditional compositions are adopted in the sculptures under the archway, representing the Nativity, Crucifixion, Judgment, and others, but with more variety than in Italy, and this obtains almost universally in the Northern parts of Europe. Next to these, in point of date and interest, are the sculptures of the porch of the Frauenkirche, executed between 1355 and 1361 by Sebald Schönhofer and the brothers Fritz and George Rupprecht, artists of no slight merit, and who also executed those of the Schöner Brunnen in the market-place; this 'Beautiful Fountain,' worthy of the name, rises to a considerable height, like a Gothic spire, of open work, with delicate tracery, enshrining statues of the Emperor and the Seven Electors, of Alexander the Great, Judas Maccabæus, Julius Cæsar, and Hector —heroes greatly celebrated in the romance and song of the middle ages; they are full of spirit and freedom, the draperies flowing and dignified, and in design and expression not unworthy of Italy.

Sculptures of various dates during the hundred years immediately subsequent may be seen at Nuremberg, but they are of comparatively inferior interest till the era of Adam Krafft and Peter Vischer, who flourished at the close of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century. The former is the more purely German; there is nothing classic in his works, but they are well composed, the features and attitudes full of expression, the design good, the drapery flowing and free,—I allude especially to the bas-reliefs representing Our Saviour's journey to Mount Calvary, at the several stations on the road leading to the cemetery of S. John,—his usual style is rather deficient in refinement. Nothing however can exceed the grace and beauty of his 'Sacraments-Hauslein,' the receptacle for the Host, in the church of S. Lawrence. It rises to the height of sixty-four feet, the lightest, airiest flight of Gothic fancy—springing from a platform supported by pillars and by the kneeling figures of Krafft and his two assistants, and then soaring upward, tapering and narrowing, interweaving and evolving itself like the vine, and covered with a profusion of statues of Saints, bas-reliefs, &c., with foliage of almost unequalled relief and detachment, elaborate to a degree, yet delicate as frostwork, though of mere stone, not marble; the statues, especially those on the balustrade, are perhaps more satisfactory than the bas-reliefs,—they are very German, but no-wise vulgar; every detail bears the stamp of masterdom. Altogether it looks like an emanation—like a column of

light vapour rising on a distant hill in the early morning, as graceful and as unsubstantial. It was begun in 1496 and finished in 1500.*

As a high work of art, however, the Shrine of S. Sebald, in the church of that Saint, finished in 1519 by Peter Vischer, "to the praise of Almighty God and the honour of S. Sebald, prince of heaven," bears the bell at Nuremberg, and indeed throughout Germany. It occupies the centre of the choir, the shrine itself being raised on a bronze pedestal lined with bas-reliefs and surmounted by a canopy supported by thin pillars, on the sides of which, on brackets, stand statues of the Apostles—the whole in the richest style of Gothic architecture. The bas-reliefs represent, on the North side, the miracles of S. Sebald on his return from Italy to Germany, when, perishing with cold, and finding no fuel in the cottage where he took shelter, he placed an icicle on the fire, which burnt like coal, and afterwards mended a broken kettle by blessing it, at the request of his host,—on the South, his conversion of a stone into bread, and rescue of a man whom the earth was swallowing alive on account of his having doubted his inspiration as a prophet.† These are admirable.

* The church of S. Sebald is rich in Adam's works. The Burial of Our Saviour, with the Procession to Calvary and the Resurrection, within a recess outside the Eastern absis,—the Saviour fainting under his Cross, attached to the second pillar, to the right, in the nave,—and the Last Supper, on the wall of the choir—the first executed in 1492, the second in 1496, the third in 1501, rank among his best performances.

† For an account of S. Sebald see Matthew Rader's 'Bavaria Sancta,' tom. ii, p. 55.

At the Western extremity, facing the entrance of the church, is a statue of S. Sebald,—at the Eastern, one of the sculptor himself, Peter Vischer, very characteristic, and dated 1508. The statues of the Apostles are equally admirable, full of dignity and expression, peculiarly calm and quiet—the drapery flowing like the Italian; there is little grace in the children and small female figures scattered about on the base, and a German impress is visible throughout, but nothing offensively obtrusive, even in his anatomy, which it is evident he had closely studied. The casting is exquisitely clean and smooth,—Nuremberg was especially famous for her skill in that line.* I should have classed this shrine with the works of Ghiberti and Donatello under the Second period of European art, had it not been Vischer's fate to close the history of progressive sculpture in Germany instead of recommencing it.†—Nuremberg, I may add, though at once and finally embracing Protestantism, was guilty of no excesses or sacrilege at the Reformation; the churches were left *in statu quo*, and remain so to this day—shrines, pictures, statues, untouched and uninjured.

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* The Germans had from a very remote era been celebrated for their skill in working metals. See Cicognara, tom. i, p. 367.

† Vischer died in 1529, aged 69, leaving several sons, casters in bronze like himself, but of inferior merit. In the Cathedral at Ratisbon there is an excellent bas-relief of the Woman taken in Adultery, by Peter. His tomb of Frederick the Wise, Duke of Saxony, at Wittemberg, is considered a *chef d'œuvre*. I have not seen it.

We must not however suppose that Cologne and Nuremberg monopolised Sculpture in Germany;* artists start up in every direction as one traverses the country, many of them of high merit, but more or less isolated and apart, as in France and England. The sculptures of the Cathedral at Strasburgh, of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, are curious, but rude, when closely examined,†—at Prague, in the court between the Cathedral and the Hradschin, stands a bronze equestrian statue of S. George and the dragon, said to have been cast in 1378, of singular merit, full of spirit, the knight armed cap-a-piè in the fashion of the fourteenth century, and doing his devoir with much ease and simplicity—altogether a surprising effort for the time, and interesting too as a product of the revival attempted by the Emperor Charles IV. in Bohemia. Nor must I omit the magnificent tomb of the Emperor Maximilian at Innspruck, with its attendant guardians, cast in bronze by Stephen and Melchior Godl, artists of the Tyrol,‡ in 1529 and the following years. It occupies the centre of the Hof-kirche—no bastard

* Flanders had her sculptors too, as early (at least) as the commencement of the fifteenth century, but their works have perished. See M. Van Hasselt's Memoir on Sculpture in Belgium, in Count A. Raczynski's 'Histoire de l'Art Moderne en Allemagne,' tom. iii, p. 473.

† See Cicognara, tom. i, tav. 38, and lib. iii, cap. 8.

‡ According to Nagler, *Künstler-Lexikon*, art. Löffler.—They were sons, probably, of Michael Godl, a celebrated Tyrolese caster in bronze, who flourished in 1486. Bernard and Henry Godl were contemporaries of Melchior and Stephen, and perhaps assisted in the work.

offspring of Grecian allegory, but thoroughly real and Teutonic. Maximilian kneels in effigy on his sarcophagus, while twenty-eight Kings and Queens, the heroes and heroines of the German race, in the costume and with the port of feudalism, keep solemn watch around him. Theodoric the Goth and Edward the Black Prince (misnamed King Arthur) are perhaps the most striking figures. The heads are too large, the faces heavy, and the women are coarse and masculine, but as a series they are full of character. Placed in the centre of Cologne Cathedral, and seen in the gloom of evening by the lightnings of a thunderstorm, I cannot conceive a grander assemblage, but their effect is lost, cooped up as they are in their actual locality.* I should add that the sarcophagus is lined with bas-reliefs by the brothers Abel of Cologne and by Alexander Colin of Malines, representing the life of the Emperor, extremely crowded in composition, but displaying much merit in the details.†

* The tomb of the Emperor Louis in the Cathedral of Munich, erected to his memory by Maximilian I. of Bavaria, seems to have been designed in imitation of that at Innspruck. And the same peculiarly Teutonic style has been reproduced very recently in the statues of the Electors of Bavaria, designed by Schwanthaler and cast by Stiglmayer for the Throne-Chamber of the Residenz. Rauch too, author of the noble sculptures of the Valhalla, has completely caught their spirit, blending it with that of the primitive Greek sculpture.

† Colin completed the work between 1563 and 1566. *Nagler.* —The Rape of the Sabines and two battle-pieces by this artist, sculptured in wood, and preserved in the Ambras Museum at Vienna, are prodigies in their way—confused in composition, but the individual figures very spirited. The style resembles that of Burgmair, Altdorffer and their brother battle-painters in

Lastly, I may mention the wood-carvings of Veit Stoss of Cracow, as you will meet them in almost every church at Nuremberg. He was born about 1447, and settled there in 1490; his works are for the most part very inferior, except a specimen preserved in the chapel of the Reichsveste, representing the Last Judgment, surrounded by small subjects referential to the Passion of Our Saviour. Many of the figures are excellent, the composition is good and expressive, and even grace gleams out occasionally. A Coronation of the Virgin, on the right hand wall, is also far superior to his average merit; the face is sweet, although as usual too full. I might mention other curious wood-carvings, both at Nuremberg and elsewhere, but it would lead to endless discussion, and like other minor branches of the fine arts, which have always flourished or decayed in dependance upon the more important, we must as a general rule pass them by.

SECTION 2.—*Traces of the primitive Roman School of Painting, North of the Alps.*

I PROCEED accordingly to the consideration of Painting North of the Alps, anterior to the introduction of the new influence of the Cinquecento.

I stated in a former page my belief that the ancient Painting of the Romans, whether introduced

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small, hereafter to be mentioned, belonging to the generation immediately antecedent to that of Colin.

by the original heathen settlers or the Christian missionaries, was perpetuated both in Italy and in the Transalpine dependencies of the Empire till the revival of sculpture and painting in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.* I may now add that the Northern branch of this venerable school, retaining its feeble colouring and graceless design, had to all appearance acquired an almost original character through the new and daring ideas its professors were called upon to express,—and that in Charlemagne's time they executed works of such extent and importance that we cannot sufficiently regret our paucity of intelligence respecting their character and proficiency.†

The most celebrated of these works would appear to have been the historical paintings of the church and palace built by Charlemagne at Ingelheim. In the Church, the histories of the Old and New Testament were represented on the opposite walls, that of the Old commencing with Paradise, the Fall and the Deluge, and continued through the histories of Abraham, Joseph, Moses and Joshua, to the Building of the Temple,—that of the New beginning with the Annunciation and ending with the Resurrection. The paintings in the Palace were similarly dedicated to profane history, commencing with the deeds of

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* *Vide supra*, tom. i, p. 55.

† The earliest historical paintings of modern Europe seem to have been the frescoes executed for Queen Theodolinda in her palace at Monza, representing the warlike deeds of the Lombards, towards the close of the sixth century.

Ninus and Cyrus, and succeeded by the story of Phalaris and the brazen bull of Perillus, Romulus and Remus laying the foundations of Rome and the Murder of the latter, the wars of Hannibal and Alexander the Great, and on the wall opposite to these, (for they seem to have adorned the great hall of audience,) the foundation of Constantinople, which led to the severance of the Eastern and Western Empires, the history of Theodosius, the reduction of the revolted Friezelanders by Charles Martel, that of Aquitaine by Pepin, and the Emperor's own conquest of the Saxons,—forming, in fact, a chronicle of the four universal monarchies up to the restoration of the Western Empire in the person of Charlemagne.*—Rude, probably, and uncouth, and not to be compared in point of grace, dignity and mechanical skill with the contemporary works of Byzantium, there yet can be little doubt that they were the mirror of the age in all its lights and shadows, strength and weakness, and that the fire-scattering energy of Charlemagne and the genius and learning of the men of mind he delighted to gather round him had alike contributed to their production.

That the artists of Ingelheim were either Italians or Germans, more probably the latter, and not Greeks, appears certain from the evidence of many ancient manuscripts, illuminated for princes of the

* See the description by Ermoldus Nigellus, in the fourth book of his poem 'De rebus Ludovici Pii,' presented to that Emperor in 826. *Ap. Menckenii Script. Rer. German.* tom. i, p. 939.

Carlovingian dynasty, and now preserved in the various public libraries of Europe,—from these too we may form as fair an estimate of the contemporary talent of the West, as of that of Byzantium from the Menologion. The oldest, apparently, is the 'Bible of S. Paul's,' at Rome, executed either for Charlemagne or for his grandson, Charles the Bald, and now preserved in the convent of S. Callisto, across the Tiber. The illuminations, in point of drawing, colouring and the whole mechanism of the art, are very inferior—not a particle of grace, and scarcely any dignity, even in the head of Our Saviour; but the ideas are often grand, and some of the compositions are very original.* The most curious painting, however, is the portrait of the Emperor on the frontispiece, of gigantic stature, seated on his throne, on a rich cushion in the Byzantine fashion, and surrounded by his courtiers, dwarfs in comparison,—adopted in the first instance probably from the ancient consular diptychs, this continued the established type of Imperial portraiture for at least two centuries;† it may be seen in the missal of Charles the

* As for example, David composing his psalms, Our Saviour dictating his Gospel to the four Evangelists, the Ascension, and the Seven Angels of the Apocalypse, each seated on his respective church. See Agincourt, *Peinture*, pl. 40, sqq.—The subscription of the scribe of this beautiful volume (whether the Illuminator also or not appears uncertain) attests the rivalry then existing between Italy and the north:—

"Ingobertus eram referens et scriba fidelis,
Graphidas Ausonios æquans superansve tenore."

† It was perpetuated too on the great seals of the Kings of Europe.

Bald preserved in the 'Bibliothèque du Roi' at Paris, and in his copy of the Gospels now in the Public Library at Munich,* and long after the extinction of the Carlovingians, in the beautiful missal presented by the Emperor S. Henry, the last of the line of Saxony, to the cathedral of Bamberg, which he had founded in 1004; here, indeed, allegorical figures of 'Sclavinia,' 'Gallia,' 'Germania,' and 'Roma' are introduced, presenting their various tribute to the Emperor;† it is executed in a much superior style of art, though apparently by the same Teutonic school, without any admixture of Byzantine influence. This, however, begins to appear, although without compromise of the native spirit, in the illuminations which follow, illustrative of the Evangelical history; some of them show traces of the traditional compositions, but varied and departed from with the independence maintained till the latest times by German artists‡—others are new and original—I may specify Our Saviour's benediction of the little children as a subject from first to last Teutonic—I scarcely recollect a single Italian instance

* The miniature representing the Elders offering their crowns to the Lamb, in this missal, seems also to be of purely Teutonic workmanship.

† Gallia offers an olive-branch, Germany a cornucopia, and Rome a golden basin.

‡ As the Baptism, Transfiguration, Resurrection of Lazarus, and Crucifixion; in the latter Our Saviour is dressed in purple, attended by the Virgin and S. John to the right and left, while the disks of the sun and moon appear above the two arms of the cross, the former wiping his eyes.

of it; the heads are generally wanting in expression, and that of Our Saviour is the youthful one of the primitive Church.—I do not feel sufficiently versed in the history of illuminated manuscripts to speak with confidence on the subject, but my impression from what I have seen is, that this early Roman school may be traced in more or less purity, through German, Anglo-Saxon and French manuscripts, as late as the fourteenth and the fifteenth century.

Of the larger works of these primitive artists, more especially their frescoes or wall-paintings in churches, few traces now survive, and more I believe in England than elsewhere.* Rude as their style undoubtedly was, neither the Byzantines, the Giotteschi nor the early painters of Cologne or Flanders seem to have imparted any improvement to it up to the accession of the Tudor dynasty. What improvement took place was from within rather than without, and exhibited itself in expression rather than in design, perspective or colouring. The paintings representing the miracles of Elijah, the war of the Maccabees against Antiochus, the Coronation of King Edward the Confessor, and others, in the Painted Chamber at Westminster, destroyed in the recent fire, were

* The Roman painting seems to have been introduced into England by the English S. Benedict, surnamed Biscop, Abbot of Weremouth, in the seventh century; he brought many paintings over from Rome, and adorned the church of S. Paul at Jarrow on the Tyne with paintings of the Old and New Testament arranged according to the parallelism of type and anti-type. These were probably frescoes, or at least wall-paintings in tempera. See Alban Butler's 'Lives of the Saints,' Jan. 12.

among the most interesting relics of the ancient Roman school; they were executed originally, in 1236 and afterwards, for Henry III., by Master Otho and Master William, the latter a monk of Westminster,* and were repainted after the great fire of 1262 by Master Walter of Durham, subsequently to which they were restored by Master Thomas of Westminster, son of Master Walter, under Edward I.,—all these artists being the court-painters of the respective sovereigns, and hence doubtless the best of their time,—"ineffabiliter depictæ" is the term applied to the series in 1322, when in the freshness of their renovation, and fairly estimated, with reference to the opportunities of improvement, they merited much praise.† To the

* Walpole confounds him with Master William of Florence, his contemporary in England, but a comparatively inferior artist, judging by his remuneration. *Monumenta Vetusta.*

† See a very interesting 'Memoir on the Painted Chamber' by John Gage Rokewode, Esq., illustrating a series of engravings from the drawings of Mr. Stothard, *Monumenta Vetusta*, vol. vi. —"The stories," says Mr. Rokewode, "are clearly told and the intention of the figures is frequently excellent. . . The action of the hands is remarkable for variety and meaning. . . One of the very remarkable merits of these works is the truth with which the drawing of the naked figure is expressed in the few examples that occur, which occasioned Mr. Stothard to remark 'that in the instances where the human figure appears divested of clothing, there is a knowledge of the form displayed which would have shamed subjects executed in this country two hundred years after, and that if it were possible to prove these to be English works, the Italians of the same period could not boast of being our superiors in art.' The early age of the works is sufficiently evident among other indications by the almost total absence of foreshortenings. The absence even of that degree of roundness

same class, but of inferior merit, belong the frescoes in the chapel of S. Sepulchre at Winchester, now much obliterated, and under which, it should be observed, are traces of still earlier and superior painting—and the series too in the Lady-chapel, executed during the early years of the sixteenth century and representing miracles of the Virgin,—very curious but of unequal merit, the heads being occasionally full of life, while the design and perspective are below the worst failures of the worst Giotteschi in Italy.* And whenever indeed, as often happens, paintings are discovered beneath the whitewash of our parish churches, they exhibit the same uncouth

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which is found in Cimabue may be owing to the unfinished state of the drawings or the decayed state of the originals.—There are scarcely any of the type-like and conventional attitudes of the Byzantine and early Italian painters, still less of their peculiar treatment of drapery. The most remarkable feature in these works is in short the absence of manner. Perhaps the only usual attitude is that of the expression of grief by leaning the head on the hand; this occurs in the works of Orcagna and elsewhere; but the action is so natural, that it is hardly to be classed among the traditional inventions. Even assuming that the heads may have been occasionally improved in later retouchings, it is probable that the cast of features and general original character are preserved. In these there is no approach to the Giottesque style. The only works of art which these might be found to resemble would be the manuscripts of the same age; but here again the analogies are rather to be sought in English and French than in Italian miniatures. The costume abounds with English peculiarities."—I have quoted these remarks in support of my ascription of the frescoes to the great Roman school of which I have so often spoken.

* The frescoes of the Lady-chapel have been engraved, with a valuable commentary by Dr. Milner, in Carter's 'Specimens,' &c., pl. 25–28; pp. 27, sqq.

and graceless style of design and composition.* It extends even to the painted glass in the windows, although that art having been an imported one, of French origin and Flemish improvement, the colours are as darkly brilliant as those of the frescoes in question are pale and washy.†

Among the most interesting of these early frescoes, as yet discovered, are the series in the chapel of the Holy Trinity at Stratford-upon-Avon, executed towards the beginning of the sixteenth century, and of which coloured engravings were published some years ago—now of the more value, as the originals (familiar probably to Shakspeare's youth) have been twice whitewashed within the present century. The paintings of the chancel must have been ineffably hideous, but the murder of S. Thomas à Becket and S. George's conquest of the dragon in the nave, evidently by a different artist, seem to have possessed much comparative merit. The latter is designed with much spirit, and is quite a study of chivalric

* The reason why so many works of this ancient style have been preserved in England, appears to be that the influences of Flanders and Italy were but just beginning to be felt there at the beginning of the Reformation, which put an effectual stop to church-decoration. Nor did the court taste apparently penetrate into the country. Independently of those that have remained exposed to the present day, countless frescoes probably exist in our parish churches, concealed and protected by whitewash.

† The best work, I believe, on the history of Painting on glass is that by M. Langlois entitled 'Essai Historique et Descriptif sur la Peinture sur Verre, ancienne et moderne,' 4to, 1832.

action and costume; the horse fights as well as the rider, and pierces the dragon with the spike on his brow like an unicorn; the sword of the knight, descending on the monster at the same moment, will cut the deeper from the weight of the iron apple loosened by the concussion, and rushing from the hilt to the point, while the spike usually fastened to the crupper of the saddle to prevent an opponent leaping up and attacking him behind, here projects at right angles, like a boss, from a sort of target or disk affixed to the nether extremity of his person.*—But I have lingered too long on a school (if it may be termed so) of such inferior merit, and shall only add that the same primitive style seems to have extended to the Scandinavian kingdoms, where in the Cathedral, especially, of Old Upsal, three very curious frescoes, representing the history of S. Eric, were existing above a century ago, when Peringskiold engraved them in his 'Monumenta Sueo-Gothica,' published in 1710,—they were then flaking off the walls, and have since, in all probability, totally disappeared.†

* See the volume entitled 'Ancient Allegorical, Historical, and Legendary Paintings in Fresco, discovered in the summer of 1804 on the walls of the Chapel of the Trinity, belonging to the Gilde of the Holy Cross, at Stratford-upon-Avon, &c., from drawings made at the time of their discovery by Thomas Fisher,' *London, fol.*, 1838.—The chapel was built by Sir Hugh Clopton, of the ancient family whose Gothic tombs may be seen in the old parish-church of Stratford-upon-Avon.

† See the 'Monumenta Sueo-Gothica,' *Stockh., fol.*, 1710, pp. 203, sqq.

SECTION 3.—*School of Cologne.*

REVERTING therefore to the times of the Emperor S. Henry, when a Byzantine influence was beginning to mingle with the ancient Romano-Teutonic style, as evidenced by the illuminations in the Bamberg missal, and assuming that this influence continued to assert itself in the neighbourhood of the Rhine for three centuries, we may fix the rise of Painting in Germany, as an independent, original and progressive art, during the latter half of the fourteenth century, when the Decorated style of Gothic architecture, and the Sculpture dependent upon it, had attained their fullest and richest development. Two distinct revivals then took place, at the Eastern and Western extremities of Europe, at Prague and at Cologne—the former fleeting and ephemeral, the latter permanent and enduring, in its influence and ramifications, to the present day. I almost hesitate indeed in terming the former a revival, dependent as it was on the association of various artists from various parts of Europe under the patronage of the Emperor Charles IV., after whose death the momentary flame sank down and expired. Tomaso of Modena was probably the eldest of these artists; sprung apparently from the long-lingering Roman school of Lombardy, he had acquired something of the manner of Giotto, but never equalled the feeblest of the genuine Giotteschi.* Würmser of Strasburgh

* *Vide supra*, tom. ii, p. 94.—A Crucifixion by this master dated 1352, and a very inferior production, may be seen at Tre-

and Dietrich of Prague, who painted the chapel of S. Wenceslaus in the Cathedral, probably acquired from him the mixture of the Italian manner which mingles so disagreeably with their original Byzantine style.* But, contemporary with these artists, or perhaps a little later, and amply atoning for their demerits, we may recognise a purely Semi-Byzantine movement, akin to that of the Guidos, Gaddo Gaddis and Ugolinos of Tuscany and the painters of the Baptistery at Parma, in the Head of Our Saviour preserved in the Cathedral, and the mosaic of the Last Judgment on the exterior wall of the chapel of S. Wenceslaus—works, especially the former, of exceeding beauty, and in their peculiar style scarcely excelled even in Italy. The mosaic was executed in 1371 for the Emperor Charles; the composition is the traditional one, with six of the favourite Saints of Bohemia† kneeling below Our Saviour; the

viso, in the Sala del Capitolo of the Dominican convent of S. Niccolò, now the school-room of the Seminario.

* The successive scenes of the history of the Passion, and the Descent of the Holy Spirit, are represented in the chapel; the Burial of Our Saviour is the most original of the compositions, the Resurrection, a single figure, one of the best. Judas is throughout dressed in yellow, the colour of treachery, and Our Saviour during his suffering, in bistre.—In the Gallery of the Belvidere at Vienna are two pictures by Dietrich, much superior to these, especially a S. Augustine, in which the head is expressive of deep thought, the colouring comparatively rich and drapery flowing; he stands at a desk resembling those seen in Byzantine pictures. Frescoes by Würmser may still be seen in the Kreuz-Capelle in the ancient castle of Karlstein, near Prague, begun in 1348. *Handbook, Southern Germany.*

† S. Procopius, S. Sigismund, S. Vitus, S. Wenceslaus, S. Lodomilla, S. Walbertus.

nimbi are blue, edged with white; the S. Michael, parting the good and bad, is excellent, and strongly resembles that of Orcagna, and the whole has an unusual and striking character. But it is not to be compared to the Head of Christ, which bears a strong resemblance alike to the early mosaics and the repetitions of the subject by the schools of Cologne and Van Eyck; it is painted on a gold ground, the type the traditional one, the expression melancholy sweetness, the long hair falling in locks on either side—a most deeply affecting picture. I have perhaps done Bohemia injustice in reckoning these under Teutonic art; they are monuments of a distinct movement of the Slavonic mind—alas! that so fair a dawning should so soon have been overcast! *

Very differently fared it at Cologne. The merit of her school had become proverbial in Germany as early as the thirteenth century,† but nothing of such remote date survives, and little of excellence prior to the latter half of the fourteenth. Then indeed it shot up, as in a night-time, into full beauty, and the morning breeze wafted its perfume into every region of Europe. First to imbibe and first to exhale the full influence of Sculpture as inspired by Niccola

* Count A. Raczynski observes that among the Slavonian nations the Bohemians are those "qu'on a vus à différentes époques chercher le plus à naturaliser les arts dans leurs pays."

† This appears from a passage pointed out by Schlegel in 'Parceval,' a contemporary romance by Wolfram von Eschenbach, in which the painters of Cologne are associated with those of Maastricht as the best in Germany. Of the school of Maastricht nothing is now known.

Pisano, and first to lead the way in that exact imitation of nature, even in trifles, which has led by diverging paths to the extremes of excellence and debasement, it became the parent of all the native Teutonic schools, with scarcely an exception, both in Germany proper and in the Netherlands, and anticipated them all in the influence they severally came to exercise sooner or later on Italy. The school of Cologne stands in fact in nearly the same relation to the North as that of Giotto does to the South, and owing to their mutual and immediate descent from Sculpture, a far closer resemblance exists between their productions than between those of the schools that branched off from them respectively during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Of the painters of Cologne individually we know little beyond their names. 'Meister Wilhelm,' who flourished in 1380,* is usually cited as the artist to whom the school owes its greatness. A 'Meister Stephan,' to whom some beautiful paintings are attributed, is supposed to have been his contemporary. We hear too of a 'Johannes de Colonia,' a 'devotissimus juvenis,' who had become a monk at Zwoll before 1440, after establishing a high secular reputation as a painter and goldsmith.† Others might

* On the authority of the Limburg Chronicle, which describes him under this year as "der berumbt Maler in Cölln, des gleichen nit ware in der Christenheit; er malet einem als wie er lebte; sein Name was Wilhelmus."—Quoted by Dr. Waagen in his work 'Ueber Hubert und Johann van Eyck,' *Breslau*, 1822, p. 170.

† Chronicle of the Convent, cited by Dr. George Rathgeber,

be mentioned, but as scarcely any of their surviving works can be identified, it is needless.

The characteristics of the school, at its most influential epoch, may be sketched as follows:—In Composition, a closer adherence to the traditional subjects than is exhibited by the later Northern schools, but without servility and with much variety in the details:—As regards Expression, the types are at first rather Byzantine, but less so afterwards,—those of the male Saints are full of dignity and character, those of the female sweet but very German—that of the Virgin sometimes approaches to ideality—the general character is purity and simplicity, without refined beauty; the angels are always chubby and inferior to the Giottesque, and usually are cut short and end in nothing, as in the very early mosaics:—The Design is correct, indeed remarkable for the period, and frequently evinces considerable knowledge of anatomy; the Drapery is flowing and dignified, and quite free from the angularity of the later German and Flemish painters, and this was the case even before the period of Meister Wilhelm, while the features and eyes of the figures were still strongly Byzantine; the improvement was evidently derived from sculpture, and hence too a very favourite usage

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p. 41 of his 'Annalen der Niederländischen Malerei, Formschneide und Kupferstecher-Kunst,' *Gotha, fol.*, 1842,—a most valuable work, which I shall have frequent occasion to refer to.—A high altar-piece by an early painter of the same name, Hans von Köln, dated 1307, may still be seen in the church of S. James at Chemnitz, and another, apparently without date, at Ehrenfriedersdorf. *Nagler.*

of representing Saints under niches to resemble statues:—The Colouring is very rich and harmonious, blues and reds predominating, the blue perhaps indicative of the profound religious feeling of the school, the red of its inherent sympathy with nature; this characteristic also seems to have been fixed before Meister Wilhelm's time;* in their earlier paintings the colouring of the flesh is dusky as in the Byzantine: — Linear Perspective was familiar to them, although it does not follow that they greatly improved it, but of Aerial they seem to have had little knowledge; their backgrounds, when not of gold, are generally rude as the Byzantine,—frequently their Saints stand on a flat grassy platform, covered with herbs and flowers, as in the mosaics; sometimes it rises and extends a little backwards, merely to be bounded by a wattled fence,—or if a glimpse of landscape does find admittance, it is limited to three or four round uninteresting hills, with a stray tree or two, tall and transparent like those of Perugino and the early works of Raphael,—in short, as a general rule, the painters of Cologne seem to have avoided landscape as anxiously as their Flemish descendants, Van Eyck and his school, courted it—a singular contrast:—All objects of Still

* I conclude so principally from four old paintings in the Museum of Cologne, representing the Annunciation to Zacharias, in two compartments, the Annunciation to the Virgin, and the Purification. The drapery is flowing, the colouring good, but the angels and especially the staring eyes of all the figures are very Byzantine.

Life, on the other hand, are most carefully imitated by them, and in this they preceded the Flemings,—gems, chalices, rich draperies, brocades and stuffs of every description, broken thatch, the wattled fences just alluded to, &c. &c., all most minutely finished, although still in subordination to the higher considerations of expression and propriety; even the innate Teutonic tendency to caricature, which led to so many vulgarities in the later schools, occasionally peeps out, as in a picture of Our Saviour before Pilate, where one of the false witnesses, in his embarrassment, scratches his head,—but this very rarely occurs. A fondness for introducing Hebrew inscriptions, the representation of the third of the Three Kings or Wise Men as a negro, and the frequent introduction of seraphs of intense blue, not in drapery only but in person, rank also among their peculiarities,—the long flowing hair of the Virgin, betokening in the Teutonic symbolism her perpetual virginity, is common to every branch of Northern art.

Of all the relics of this very interesting school, the most important is the 'Dom-bild,' or ancient altar-piece of the Cathedral at Cologne, painted in 1410, and attributed by some to Meister Wilhelm, by others to Meister Stephan.* The principal compo-

* The Dom-bild being the acknowledged *chef-d'œuvre* of the school, and M. Wilhelm its most illustrious artist, it seems natural to connect this picture and the painter by the link of authorship. On the other hand, Albert Dürer in his diary attributes the picture to M. Stephan, following to all appearance the tradition of the day—evidence not to be disregarded. Pas-

sition represents the Adoration of the Kings, who kneel to the right and left of the Virgin and the child, while their attendants stand behind them with their banners, emblazoned with the armorial bearings assigned to them by the heralds of the middle ages. The heads, with the exception of the negro king, are German in type and full of character, the figures well relieved, the composition excellent, the drawing good, especially that of the hands, the accessaries carefully done but not too obtrusively,—the whole, in short, forming a happy alliance of beauty and propriety. The colouring is perhaps less vivid than in the works attributed to Meister Wilhelm at Munich. The best of these are a series of detached figures of Apostles and Saints, each, for the most part, standing singly in a Gothic niche;* some of them are full of lofty expression, of serene dignity, their attitudes noble and free, the draperies quite Italian; other of the heads are not very refined, and the noses are sometimes rather thick and clumsy.—I may mention also a Crucifixion in the Museum at Cologne, attributed to Meister Wilhelm; the Byzantine tinge is strong in the colouring of the faces,—it is probably one of his early paintings.†

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savant considers M. Stephan to have been a pupil of Meister Wilhelm.

* With brocade nailed up against the wall or wainscot behind, as in the later works of Fra Angelico, who probably copied it from some picture of the Transalpine school.

† A S. Veronica holding the veil with the head of our Saviour, the traditional type and almost black, at Munich, is also extremely good.—Passavant attributes to M. Wilhelm the large

That same collection possesses a treasure, however, in the Last Judgment attributed to Meister Stephan, —a very remarkable picture, and one of the most complete examples of a modification of the Byzantine composition, which was constantly reiterated by the painters of Cologne and Northern Germany during the fifteenth century. Our Saviour is seated on the rainbow, blessing with his right hand and holding the left open, exposing the wound, towards the reprobate; his head is not very good,—seraphs float in the air to the right and left, carrying the instruments of the Passion; the Virgin and the Baptist kneel in front to the right and left of Our Saviour, their heads superior to his; while below, in the centre, the graves open and the dead arise, and are appropriated by angels or devils according to their deeds,—the saved are conducted by angels to the gate of Paradise, a lofty Gothic tower, the door of which is held by S. Peter, while a host of angels welcome them with music, and another choir appear on the battlements,—the condemned are dragged and driven to the infernal regions, where Satan presides in person in front of a vast burning furnace, into which a victim is being precipitated. The picture swarms with ideas, there is great softness and beauty of expression in the figures conducted to Paradise; an angel embracing a female figure encouragingly reminds one (in its comparative infe-

altar-piece formerly at S. Clara, now in one of the chapels of the Cathedral at Cologne, and which he thinks was painted by him with the assistance of two pupils. *Nagler.*

riority) of Fra Angelico—Meister Stephan, indeed, does the diabolic part with the same zest that the Florentine does the angelic; a fat paunch-swollen female miser, lying on her back in front, is a horrible object. The naked figures exhibit a careful study of design, which is never however carried to affectation by the exaggerated display of veins and muscles. The colouring is very rich, but in the head of Our Saviour, especially, retains somewhat of the dusky Byzantine tinge. The flowers, grass, &c., are executed with the minutest finish; the angels have much resemblance to those of the later Flemish school, and the wings of many of them are of peacocks'feathers.*

* I need scarcely observe that if this picture be by the same hand as the Dom-bild, it must be of earlier date, probably by many years. It was formerly in the church of S. Lawrence at Cologne. The two pictures at Munich, there attributed to M. Wilhelm and each representing three Saints,[a] are said to have been its *volets* or wings. If so, the remaining full-length figures of Saints and Apostles there preserved, and referred to in the text as works of M. Wilhelm, must similarly be assigned to M. Stephan; they belong, according to Nagler, together with the Annunciation and the Prayer on the Mount of Olives in the same gallery, to a *third* picture by M. Stephan, the earliest of his works, formerly belonging to the Benedictine abbey of Heisterbach, near Bonn.—The result of all this will be to rob M. Wilhelm of everything but his "good name," leaving him "poor indeed" as regards evidence in vindication of it.—Of the repetitions or variations of the above composition, one of the most remarkable is preserved in the Academy at Bruges,—the wicked are represented as dragged by horrid monsters into hell, illuminated by flames throwing the city of Dis into strong relief. The

[a] Antony the hermit, Pope Cornelius and the Magdalen; S. Catherine, S. Hubert and S. Quirinus.

The preceding paintings afford ample data for forming a correct estimate of the school of Cologne; others may be found both there and at Munich, but space constrains me and I shall cite no more. Three artists, indeed, of great merit, Israel van Mekenen, John of Mehlem, and Bartholomew de Bruyn, are frequently reckoned in the school, but they lived at a period when that of Van Eyck had taken the lead, and they had profited so much under his influence that we may with more correctness rank them under

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The background is a boundless ocean covered with vessels, some of which bring the souls of the righteous, who land and ascend in a long stream towards paradise, whilst others, freighted with evil-doers, are themselves living monsters. The picture is described as by an unknown author, but I have little doubt that it is either by Jerome Bosch or one of his imitators—a tribe whose characteristics, however original and meritorious in their way, exclude them from consideration under this first department of high and serious Christian art. The Last Judgment at Dantzig, dated 1467, and attributed to Van Eyck, who died several years before, is a picture of far higher fame and importance. I know it only by the engraving, (*Raczynski, Hist., &c.*, tom. i, p. 86,) and by description, but the composition and style seem decidedly those of Cologne, while the sword and lily to the right and left of Our Saviour's head remind one of the similar composition in the Nuremberg Chronicle, designed by Michael Wohlgemuth, the master of Albert Dürer. A Last Judgment by that painter in the Museum at Cologne evidently proves his connection, more or less direct, with the school. And the tradition of Dantzig, as far back as 1615, ascribed it to a painter of the name of Michael. It has been by others attributed to two brothers James and John Van Eichen, who are said to have worked forty years upon it. I may observe incidentally, that the style of Cologne prevails unmistakeably throughout the woodcuts of the 'Biblia Pauperum,' the 'Historia Virginis Mariæ ex Cantico Canticorum,' and the 'Speculum Humanæ Salvationis,' usually attributed to the school of Van Eyck or Flanders.

it. I shall only mention, as a specimen marking the moment of transition, a Crucifixion by an unknown painter in the gallery at Cologne, in which the heads and drapery strongly exhibit the tendency towards the new Flemish taste.

Singularly enough, it is only in very recent times that Germany and Europe have recognised the merit, have become aware even of the existence of this mother school of the North; that of Van Eyck threw all preceding excellence into the shade, and by an unparalleled fatality, it vanished completely away from the thought and the memory of men; it became forgotten, even at Cologne itself, as if it had never been,—its productions, when glanced at with a pitying smile, were ascribed to the Fleming and his crew of followers, and this lasted till the beginning of the present century. The sacrileges of the Revolution, the destruction of churches and monasteries, by a strange vicissitude, restored it to notice; the ancient altar-pieces, torn down and thrown into the streets, attracted the notice of two brothers, the Messieurs Boisserée, who recognised their merit and interposed for their preservation. They devoted their time and fortune to this generous object, and the result was the magnificent collection which they afterwards disposed of to the King of Bavaria, and which is now divided between the galleries of Munich and Schleissheim,* and the chapel of S. Maurice at

* See Count A. Raczynski's 'Histoire,' &c., tom. i, p. 73. —The best of these paintings have been beautifully lithographed at Munich.

Nuromberg. Goethe, it is said, was the first to point out the distinction between a large class of these paintings and those of Van Eyck's school, and the relation between the former, those namely of Cologne, and the elder Byzantine art; the epithet 'Byzantine-Rhenish' has consequently been applied to them by the Germans, with less perhaps than their usual precision, since the school of Cologne was not a revival of Byzantine ideas and expression, but, like Giotto's, a new creation altogether, though from old materials. Nothing, however, could be more fortunate, at such a juncture, than this recognition, however imperfect, of a remote Christian Nationality of art, and we shall perceive more fully in the sequel how much it conduced to that revival of Painting, and indeed of Art in general, which elicits the sympathy and admiration of every foreigner who at the present moment visits Germany.

PART II.

SCHOOL OF VAN EYCK, OR OF THE NETHERLANDS.

SECTION I.—*The Brothers Van Eyck, and their immediate followers.*

MEANWHILE I proceed, in due order, to the two great branches of the school of Cologne, that of Flanders and that of Upper Germany, the former of which, as first developed, claims our earlier attention; it possesses a peculiar originality in virtue of

its pointed self-divorce from Sculpture and Architecture, and its rejection of the traditions of the elder Christian Art,—"Nature as she is, in all her beauty and all her deformity, and farewell to the Ideal!" might have been the motto inscribed in their studio by its founders, the celebrated brothers Hubert and John Van Eyck.

They were born at Maas-Eyck, a village on the Rhine between Maastricht and Roermond, Hubert, it is said, in 1366, John in 1370; the former date may be nearly correct, but the latter is much too early,—Hubert appears to have been from twenty to thirty years senior to his brother,* whose birth may be fixed with greater probability towards the close of the century. Hubert's master is unknown,† but his style is evidently derived from that of Cologne. He instructed his brother John and Margaret their sister,—the latter devoted herself to painting with such ardour as to reject all offers of

* As deduced from the statements of Lucas van Heere and Marcus van Vaernewyck, writers of the sixteenth century, that John van Eyck died in the flower of his age—and from the portraits of the brothers painted in a compartment of the great altar-piece at Ghent presently to be noticed, in which Hubert is represented old and grey-haired and John as a man of about thirty-five. It may be added, although counting for little in such an argument, that John van Eyck's wife was aged only thirty-three in 1439 when her portrait (now in the Academy at Bruges) was painted by her husband.

† Johannes de Bruges, a painter who was in the employment of Charles V. of France in 1371, has been supposed the father and instructor of the brothers Van Eyck,—but this rests on mere conjecture, as we are ignorant even of the Christian name of their parent.

marriage in consequence; a few of her works are still preserved, very graceful and womanly in feeling, but rather feeble in point of execution.* Hubert and John worked many years together, enjoying a high reputation, which, as regarded John, became European on his discovery of the art of painting in oils, or at least of such an improvement on the methods previously in use as to be tantamount to the discovery. So complete and satisfactory was the new process, that the old was abandoned at once and for ever, and John van Eyck was universally recognised as the solver of a problem which had puzzled all preceding generations.†

* Margaret van Eyck, who was probably more nearly Hubert's contemporary than John's, died at Ghent before the former, that is to say, before 1426. One of her paintings, a Repose in Egypt, the earliest apparently of the subject and very pleasing, may be seen in the Museum at Antwerp. It was thus a woman that led the way to those less formal and more endearing representations of the Holy Family which gradually supplanted the ancient symmetrical composition. Margaret's *chef-d'œuvre* seems to have been the Virgin reading, attended by Saints, in a landscape, formerly in the collection of M. Aders, London. See Passavant's 'Tour of a German Artist in England,' tom. i, p. 207.

† It seems equally clear that oil was used in preparing and working with colour for centuries before Van Eyck's time,—and that he made some discovery which removed the difficulties which had previously attended the operation, and rendered it easy and practically useful. This discovery is supposed to have been that of a siccative or drying oil, rendering the artist independent of the sun or of artificial heat for the progress of his work.[a] Popular fame has ascribed the improvement to John van Eyck exclusively, but it was probably the result of the researches and genius of both brothers.

[a] The embarrassment and delay occasioned by the ancient practice is clearly expressed by Theophilus, a writer of the eleventh century:—

It was in this new style of painting that the brothers executed their most important work, the altar-piece for the chapel of the Vyts family in the Cathedral at Ghent. Hubert died in September, 1426, before it was half finished ;* it was completed by John before May, 1432, two of the intervening years having been spent in Spain and Portugal, whither he had accompanied an embassy from Flanders.† He subsequently settled at Bruges, then in the height of her prosperity as the emporium of the North and the residence of the court of Philip the Good, in whose person the whole of Burgundy and the Netherlands recognised their sovereign; Van Eyck enjoyed his highest favour and respect, and held the rank of a privy-councillor in his service. He worked there for some years, but died while still in the prime of life before 1446.‡

* On the 18th September, according to the inscription on his tomb-stone preserved by Van Mander, the Vasari of Flemish art;[a] it may be seen in Dr. Waagen's valuable little work, 'Ueber Hubert und Johann van Eyck,' p. 76. He was buried, out of gratitude and esteem probably, in the family vault of the Vyts family in the Cathedral. *Nagler.*

† *Rathgeber.*

‡ As proved by the mention, 24 Feb., 1445–6, of the "widow of Jan van Eyck" in a contemporary document—no other family of the name being then resident at Ghent. *Rathgeber.*

"Omnia genera colorum eodem genere olei teri et poni possunt in opere ligneo in his tantum rebus, quæ soli siccare possunt, quia, quotiescunque unum colorem imposueris, alterum ei superponere non potes, nisi prior exsiccetur, quod in imaginibus diurnum et tædiosum nimis est."— *Quoted by Dr. Waagen, Ueber Hubert und Joh. van Eyck,* p. 97.

[a] His 'Schilder-Boeck,' or Lives of Painters, Classic, Italian and Teutonic, was printed at Amsterdam, 4to, 1618.

Such was the career of this interesting brotherhood, and fortunately for their fame, their best works have descended to us as fresh as when they were first painted. They are very numerous, more especially those of John,—you will not be uninterested, I hope, by a brief notice of a few of the most celebrated specimens.

None can compete in point of importance with the great altar-piece of Ghent. In its original state it consisted of twelve compartments, in two rows,—that is to say, three central compartments in the upper row, and one in the lower, together with eight wings or shutters, painted within and without, four above and four below, to secure the interior from injury.—When the whole was shut up, the Annunciation appeared in the upper row, with figures of Micah and Zacharias respectively over the heads of Mary and the angel, and in the lower, John the Baptist and John the Evangelist in the centre, with the proprietor of the chapel, Jodocus Vyts and his wife, Elizabeth Barluut, kneeling in prayer, at the extremities to the right and left.*—When the whole was opened, God the Father appeared in the centre of the upper row, attended to the right and left in distinct compartments by the Baptist and the Virgin,

* Dr. Waagen (p. 224) considers the kneeling male figure the portrait of Hubert van Eyck, and the female that of the wife of one of the brothers or of Margaret van Eyck,—the latter personage had been previously suggested by Madame Schopenhauer in her 'Johann van Eyck und seine Nachfolger,' *Frankf. u. M.*, 2 tom. du. 1822.

on the two nearest wings by two bands of choristers, the one singing, the other playing on musical instruments, and on the two farthest, by full-length figures of Adam and Eve, over which were respectively figured, in small, the Sacrifice of Cain and Abel and the Murder that succeeded it,—while in the centre of the lower row appeared, in a large oblong square compartment, the Inauguration (as it were) of the Spotless Lamb of the Apocalypse,* and on the four wings the 'Just Judges,' the 'Soldiers of Christ,' the 'Holy Hermits,' and the 'Holy Pilgrims,' hastening to his Adoration.—Now indeed it is impossible to appreciate on the spot the beauty and unity of this arrangement, circumstances having transported the wings to Berlin, leaving the central compartments at Ghent, where they form the admiration of every visitor to that interesting city.†

The shares of the two brothers, respectively, in this extensive work are pretty accurately distinguishable. The general arrangement and composition are in all probability Hubert's,—the Father Almighty and the Baptist are entirely by his hand, and part of the Virgin Mary, and he is supposed to have also painted the Hermits and the Pilgrims. The remaining compartments are entirely by John, with the exception of the two figures of Micah and Zacharias,

* The *predella* of this central compartment painted in tempera and long since washed out by restoration, represented the Fire of Purgatory.

† Prints exhibiting the entire composition may be seen in Passavant's Tour, tom. i, p. 200.

done by Gerard van der Meire, pupil of Hubert, and John's assistant in the completion of the work, and who also painted the Virgin and Gabriel in the Annunciation, with the exception of the heads and hands, which were reserved by John for his own pencil.*

Earliest in point of date, and second only in interest to the Adoration of the Lamb, are the three full-length figures of the Almighty, the Virgin and S. John, painted on a gold ground in the ancient fashion. The works of Hubert elsewhere preserved by no means prepare one for the excellence that these exhibit; truth and purity of feeling characterise all his pictures, but are generally qualified by a degree of weakness and uncertainty.† But here we have power of conception and vigour of execution to a very singular degree; the Father—seated on his throne, not as a venerable patriarch but in the strength of manhood, in robes of regal crimson, the tiara on his head, the sceptre in his left hand and with his right blessing the universe—is a most majestic figure, and the head of the Virgin, although deficient in Southern etheriality, has seldom been equalled North of the Alps. The colouring is rich beyond belief, glowing and fresh as if finished yes-

* *Rathgeber.*—Passavant, I believe, first pointed out the distinction of styles and authorship.

† As in the Virgin and child and the portrait in the Museum at Antwerp, the Virgin and child, S. Catherine and S. Michael at Dresden, and the S. Catherine at Vienna, in which latter picture the drapery is (for Hubert) unusually broken and minute.

terday, and the drapery is dignified and flowing, in broad, noble folds, a characteristic of Cologne which Hubert retained with much more tenacity than his brother,—John's drapery is frequently as broken and stiff as that of the most degenerate of his followers.

If the Hermits and the Pilgrims, at Berlin, be Hubert's also, (and the drapery at least would confirm them his,) there is scarcely an excellence of John in which he was not anticipated and rivalled by Hubert; the figures, many of them portraits, are full of life and expression, and the landscape is admirable.

But the compartment fullest of the future is unquestionably the Adoration of the Lamb by John van Eyck. The scene is a green flowery meadow, backed by a rich landscape of wood and hill, the latter crowned by the New Jerusalem, resembling a Flemish town of the fifteenth century, rising above the trees. The Lamb, with the glory, stands on an altar in the centre of the meadow, turning his head and gazing expressively at the spectator, as in the mosaics; blood flows from his side into the sacramental cup, placed beside him on the altar; angels kneel round in a circle, adoring—those behind holding the column, the cross and other instruments of the passion, two in front waving their censers. The Dove descends on the Lamb from the Father. Immediately in front, a fountain springs up and falls within an octagonal marble font or reservoir, flowing out again as the river of the waters of life proceeding "from the throne of God and the Lamb." Four

companies kneel or stand in distinct groups and at a respectful distance around the altar, the Saints of the Old-Testament and the Apostles, Doctors of the Church, early sainted Popes, and founders of the monastic orders, in front, and other male and female Saints of the Church Catholic behind. The altar is red, the colour of love and martyrdom, and lilies and roses, symbolical of virginity and immortality, are scattered over the foreground. Many of these ideas, it is obvious, are inherited from the elder days of Christian tradition, but they have been completely Germanised in passing through Van Eyck's mind. Nor is the execution unworthy of the composition,—the heads are full of expression, the colouring is rich and brilliant to a degree, the angels are more angelic and come nearer the Italian than in almost any other Teutonic picture, and a heavenly feeling, a mystical charm, is suffused over the whole scene, which it is impossible to describe, and which, like music, it requires perhaps a peculiar mental and physical temperament to appreciate,—the green flowery grass and the freshness and beauty of the landscape (which connects itself and forms one harmonious whole with that in the background of the wings) enhance the sentiment, involuntarily suggesting a "better land" of perennial sunshine. The landscape is most minute; every leaf and flower is discriminated as in the paintings of Paul Brill and Velvet Breughel—I mention this as a peculiarity, not a merit; the multitude of little figures is extraordinary,—no less than three hundred and thirty

heads are said to be distinguishable, and, like the leaves of a tree, not one exactly resembles the other.* —With the single exception of the drapery being too much broken, the whole picture exhibits a singular freedom from stiffness.

The remaining compartments, whether at Ghent or Berlin, are for the most part equally excellent in their way; you will notice the beauty of the landscape, the spirit of the horses and the character and ease of the riders in the wings representing the Righteous Judges† and the Warriors of Christ, at Berlin, and the predominant propensity of the German race to the quest of truth rather than beauty, in the warts to which such ample justice is done in the portrait of the donor, Jodocus Vyts.‡ The full-length figures of the two S. Johns, in chiaro-scuro, imitating statues, will remind you of Cologne.

I have been thus minute in description, inasmuch as the altar-piece in question is one of the most important land-marks in our history; the destiny of oil-painting is anticipated in it in almost every particular.

Of the remaining works of Van Eyck, I may cite as one of the most beautiful, the head of Our Sa-

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* *Descamps, Vies des Peintres Flamands, Allemands et Hollandois*, 1753, tom. i, p. 3.

† In this volet the two brothers Hubert and John are represented riding side by side, Hubert, the eldest, grey-haired (as mentioned in a preceding note) and wearing a furred cap of singular shape, John a younger man, aged about thirty-five.

‡ There is an admirable head of this gentleman by Van Eyck at Vienna.

viour, painted in 1440, or according to others in 1420,* now in the Academy at Bruges: the head is remarkable for dignity and feeling, although too full for the type; it looks you straight in the face, a style adopted by the Germans from the old mosaics and the Byzantine pictures, and by them re-introduced into Italy.†

Another and apparently an early painting, representing the Seven Sacraments, formerly at Dijon, the capital of Burgundy, is preserved in the Museum at Antwerp. The composition is very singular. The three compartments present the nave and aisles of a magnificent Gothic Cathedral; Baptism, Confirmation and Confession are figured by detached groups in the Northern aisle, Ordination, Marriage and Extreme Unction in the Southern, the heads and figures excellent and full of expression,—an angel, bearing a scroll, hovers over each group, each angel wearing a differently coloured robe,—while, looking up the central nave, the prospect is closed by the high altar where the priest is in the act of elevating the host, in the performance of the seventh sacrament, the Eucharist, and immediately in front, at the entrance of the nave, close as it were to the spectator on entering the church, towers a lofty crucifix, Our Saviour himself on the tree, the head very good, the Virgin fainting below, supported by S. John and the Maries,—there is little beauty in these figures but

* *Waagen*, p. 206; *Rathgeber*.

† There is a similar head by Van Eyck at Berlin, dated Jan. 31, 1438.

deep grief; the faces, forms and dress are thoroughly Flemish, and the drapery is very broken. The architecture is peculiarly well painted in this picture, and Van Eyck here appears as the forerunner of Neefs and Steenwick.*

Perhaps the most pleasing of all his pictures, next to the altar-piece of Ghent, is the Adoration of the Kings at Munich, an admirable painting, and peculiarly grateful to the eye from its subdued character and its freedom from the display of drapery and detail, which is rather too conspicuous in his later pictures. Purity and simplicity and sweet feeling characterise the Virgin, the kings are evidently portraits; the distant air-tints and the blue hills of the landscape are excellent. I scarcely recollect any picture in which Van Eyck's merits are so equally counterchecked and balanced.†

On the other hand, the repetition of this subject in the same gallery, with the Annunciation and Presentation on the wings, displays a finish and minuteness in the details exquisite in their way, but which

* The S. Luke taking the portrait of the Virgin at Munich is also probably an early painting, the Saint being the portrait of Van Eyck's elder brother Hubert; his head is excellent, that of the Virgin not very elevated; the distant landscape and the side views into the market-place of the town, with the ancient gable-ended houses and the citizens moving about, are excellent.

† Dr. Waagen indeed, arguing from the comparatively modern character of the aerial perspective and of the colouring of the distant mountains, from the fuller design and the want of character which he complains of in some of the heads, denies the authenticity of this picture, and inclines to attribute it to Roger of Bruges.

distract attention from the story; it is the transition from history to *genre*, the accessary supplanting the principal. Nowhere however are these accessaries more gracefully or pleasingly introduced,—the perspective of the street, of the octagonal Lombard church introduced in lieu of the Temple in the Presentation—the singular costumes in the same compartment, and the brocades, draperies and jewels, scattered over all three, and more especially the interior of the Virgin's chamber, with its carved walls, canopied bed, the richly-inlaid floor, the carpet and the stream of sunshine in which the Dove descends through the window, have scarcely been excelled by Gerard Dow himself or his followers at Leyden.*

The longer Van Eyck lived, the more did the passion for introducing these accessary details gain upon him; on the other hand, it must in fairness be allowed that the dignity of his figures remained unimpaired to the last. Such is the case in the picture of S. Jerome in the Museum at Naples, attributed indeed to Colantonio, but now, I believe, generally recognised as Van Eyck's.† The Saint, a noble figure, is seated in his cell and occupied in extracting the thorn from the paw of the lion, who sits on his tail, looking as sagacious and wise as if initiated into the contents of the manuscripts that lie scattered

* The kneeling king in the Adoration is the likeness of Philip the Good, and the third king, who has taken off his turban, that of Charles the Bold of Burgundy. *Nagler.*

† Hirt considers it such,—*Rathgeber*, p. 37.

around him; nothing can exceed the truth with which these are represented,—the rich and quaint binding, the stamped and gilt leaves, the marks for reference, would warm the very heart of a bibliomaniac; the picture is full of details, endless and most amusing,—the ink-stand, the worn stump of a pen, a glass half full of oil, the Saint's hour-glass, his spectacles and his scissors, a papal bull with the leaden seal, loose sheets of paper—nay, with a peculiar refinement, a rat is introduced just within the opening of an empty and disused oven, busily nibbling a piece of paper, in token, as the *custode* informed me, of S. Jerome's "penitenza," or abstinence. The picture bears the date of 1436, the spirit is purely Flemish, and certainly no other painter than Van Eyck then living could have executed it; at the same time there is a comparative largeness of design, and a freedom and flow in the drapery, savouring rather of Italy or Cologne.

But that which is excusable in the S. Jerome is less so in the Virgin and child, an undoubted work of Van Eyck, executed in the same year, 1436, and now in the Academy at Bruges. The attitude of the Virgin indeed is full of dignity, her face benignant though not beautiful, and as usual too full. But the jewels, the armour, the oil-cloth of the throne, (then a newly-invented luxury,) the rich purple silk and gold embroidery lavished on the dress of the attendant Saints, are painfully prominent, however exquisite the imitation; and in the portrait of the kneeling devotee every wart, vein, and wrinkle in

his withered countenance is depicted with a truth till then unequalled—the triumph of the prosaic.

Familiarised as we are with the general principles and aim of Italian art, it is difficult to conceive the enthusiasm with which these novelties in representation were hailed in Italy,—it was for a moment only, but during that moment her faith in the ideal fairly staggered. A contemporary writer has left us a rapturous description of a painting by Van Eyck recently imported into Italy. It represented a party of women naked and coming out of the bath; one of the figures, whose back was turned to the spectator, was seen in profile in a mirror,—the bath was lighted by a lamp, an old female attendant actually seemed to perspire with the intense heat, and through the window the eye roved over an endless expanse of plain and mountain, castles and villages, so artfully disposed that fifty miles' distance seemed to intervene between them. The immediate foreground was filled with minute figures of men and horses,—in fact we have here, by anticipation, Honthorst and Schalken, and the bird's-eye landscape-painters of the sixteenth century,—while a dog drinking, and which he has frequently repeated in his other paintings, entitles him to the honour of having opened the path afterwards trod by Sneyders and our own Landseer.*—In short, there is scarcely one of the

* See the little work 'De Viris Illustribus' by Bartholomew Facius, *Florence*, 1745.—The picture described in the text belonged to the Cardinal Ottaviano degli Ottaviani, and afterwards (according to Vasari, *Introduzione*, cap. xxi,) to Frederic II.,

minor departments of painting in which he did not lead the way and prompt to excellence by his example.

The preceding descriptions have pretty well anticipated what I might otherwise have said by way of summary of Van Eyck's characteristics as an artist. A general softness of manner and tenderness of sentiment, and a deep religious feeling, pervade his works with scarcely an exception; his compositions are full of thought, original, and distinguished (as I have already observed) by an almost absolute rejection of the Byzantine types and traditions; this becomes more and more apparent after the death of Hubert van Eyck, and as he advanced in years himself,—I need not add that I regret it; the sympathy with Cologne and the resemblance to sculpture diminish in proportion, till Nature rules supreme, and his Saints, male and female, are pure unmitigated Flemings. As such, their heads are excellent —individual, truthful and vigorous, but they exhibit little variety of emotion; if he attempts either a smile or a tear, it runs into caricature. His design is tolerably correct, but deficient in selection and grace,—his broken drapery I have already blamed,—

Duke of Urbino. Facius mentions also a round globe which Van Eyck had painted for Philip of Burgundy, on which not only the regions but the distances were marked,—and a painting, in the possession of Alfonso, King of Naples, representing the Annunciation, with the Baptist and S. Jerome, surrounded by his books, presumably on the wings,—these being shut, the outside presented the portraits of Baptista Lomellino and his wife, kneeling probably in prayer.

an untoward legacy to his school. Of his colouring on the other hand, and his anticipations of the Still Life of the more modern Dutch, it is impossible, considering them by their individual merits, to speak too highly. It is perhaps for his improvement in perspective, lineal and aerial, that he deserves our warmest gratitude; the former, indeed, had long been studied in the South, although the Italians themselves conceived him to have contributed much towards its perfection,* but for the latter we are almost exclusively beholden to him,—he is in effect the father of landscape-painting, and all that we gaze at with such rapture in the works of Poussin and Claude, Cuyp and Ruysdael, nay even in the lovely backgrounds of Perugino, Pinturicchio, Ghirlandajo, Bellini, Francia, Zingaro, Leonard and Raphael, may be traced back to his sunny banks, shady woods and glittering waters, the green freshness of his foregrounds and the transparent purity of the atmosphere, through which the eye roves delightedly over hill and mountain till lost in azure distance. He was

* The Giotteschi, especially Giusto of Padua, had taken the first steps in linear perspective, and Uccello, Pietro della Francesca, Bramantino, Alberti and other Italian artists advanced it greatly, both by precept and example, towards the middle of the fifteenth century; but an intermediate link is wanting, and we find it in the works of Van Eyck and his immediate disciples, current everywhere throughout Italy during the period immediately preceding that of the artists in question. In accordance with this, we read in the treatise 'De Viris Illustribus,' that "Joannes Gallicus," (as the author calls him, "nostri seculi pictorum princeps,") was "literarum nonnihil doctus, Geometriæ præsertim." Cited by *Dr. Waagen*, p. 102.

thus the first to feel, or at least to express in art that enjoyment of natural beauty, out of doors, to which, judging from their early painting at least, the Italians seem to have been originally less susceptible than the Teutonic race, or if equally susceptible, unquestionably less conscious and demonstrative of it. It is to a sentiment of Individuality and Home still more decidedly Northern, that we may attribute the fondness for interiors and detail, which we have noticed in so many of the pictures just described, and the infusion of a homeliness and familiar personality into religious representations, diametrically opposed to the vague ideal and mystic reverence observed by the Southern nations; the representation of the Annunciation as taking place in the Virgin's private chamber, in lieu of the Temple, will illustrate what I mean; and this rapidly led to the less abstract and comparatively every-day features and attire of the Madonna herself, and the substitution of Holy Families in place of the ancient queen-and-court-like traditional composition,—innovations which all found their way, sooner or later, to Italy. While, lastly, it is to another and kindred tendency of the Teutonic mind, to fix on points of dissemblance rather than similarity, on the exceptions rather than the rule of Nature, that we must seek his excuse, and that of Flemish and German artists in general, for the personal deformities which they delight to dwell upon—the wrinkles, warts and unseemly peculiarities which Nature is only heir to through her lapse in Paradise.—For all these varied lines of excellence,

whether for good or evil in the result, the discovery of the art of painting in oils prepared the means and heralded the way, as we shall see more clearly hereafter.

The style and principles of Van Eyck were adhered to with strict fidelity by the whole of his immediate disciples, and by some even of the second generation, neglectful of contemporary improvement in their veneration for his memory. Of these I may name at present Gerard vander Meire of Ghent, Roger of Bruges, Hugo vander Goes of the same city, and Roger vander Weyde of Brussels, as deserving especial praise.*

Gerard was in truth, as I have already intimated, a follower of Hubert rather than John van Eyck; his style proves it, independently of an attestation to that effect in an ancient manuscript.† Imagination and invention characterise the few pictures that remain of him; the Procession to Calvary in the Museum at Antwerp,‡ although rather exaggerated and

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* Of Albert van Ouwater and Gerard of Harlem, the transporters of the style to Holland, and of Antonello of Messina, who carried it to Italy, I shall speak hereafter.—Peter Christopherson may be mentioned here, as the author of the earliest known oil-painting of the Van Eyck school, a Madonna dated 1417, formerly in the collection of M. Aders, in London, now in that of M. Passavant at Berlin. There is also a portrait of a lady of the Talbot family by this artist in the Gallery at Berlin.

† Of the end of the fifteenth century, and belonging to M. J. B. Delbecq. See *Rathgeber*, p. 44.

‡ In this picture the knee-pan of an executioner who carries the hammer and pushes Our Saviour onwards with a stick, is dread-

void of dignity or beauty, is full of expression, and the drapery is more flowing than usual; perhaps this is a proof of early execution,—among artists born during the first half of the fifteenth century, when the statuesque influence of Cologne was still felt, the angularity of the drapery is frequently in proportion to the advancing age of the painters—the reverse of what obtains subsequently to 1450. In the background of this picture are seen the Flight into Egypt, and in the extreme distance, the soldiers of Herod interrogating a party of reapers when the Son of Man had passed by,—in allusion to the legend of their escape elsewhere related; you will find this incident frequently introduced in the works of the early Flemish school.

Two pictures by Gerard at Berlin, the Salutation and the Adoration of the Kings, are also worthy of notice; the Virgin's head is peculiarly sweet and pure, and this indeed is constantly the case in his paintings.

But his most remarkable and undoubted production is an altar-piece in the Cathedral of Ghent—probably his latest work, having been painted in the year of his death, 1447—representing the Crucifixion, with Moses purifying the waters of Marah and the Elevation of the Brazen Serpent, on the wings;*

fully broken, while he appears unconscious of pain; I do not know to what legend this refers.

* The tree thrown into the water by Moses is interpreted as typical of the cross hallowing the waters of baptism,—of the infusion of Divine grace, purchased by the Redeemer's blood, into the embittered heart of fallen man.

it has merits and peculiarities of its own, although at first sight apparently a century older than Van Eyck's Adoration of the Lamb in the neighbouring chapel; the thieves are not nailed, but tied to the cross, with hands and legs painfully distorted; the horse of the centurion is full of fire; in the landscape you will observe snowy mountains in the distance; the colouring of the flesh is very white, and the figures are intensely Flemish, but feeling and expression make amends for this. The colouring is very green, the drapery very angular, although the style of Hubert is still perceptible.*

Roger of Bruges, on the contrary, is wholly the creature of the younger brother, John van Eyck;† his outlines are sharper and more angular and his colouring is less rich, but the style is essentially the same. He enjoyed a reputation in his day, not merely in Flanders but in Italy and Spain, surpassing that which his existing works vindicate as his due; in 1445 he figures as "the great and famous Fleming," employed by Juan II. in painting for the church of the Carthusian convent at Miraflores, near Burgos;‡ five years afterwards he appears at Rome

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* I shall speak of Gerard as a miniaturist in the following section.

† So Facius describes him, and Vasari in the Introduction to his work, cap. 20, and in the life of Antonello of Messina, though he afterwards, in his closing notice 'Di diversi artefici Fiamminghi,' confounds him with Roger vander Weyde.

‡ See *Dr. Waagen*, p. 191, and *Rathgeber*. He is styled 'Magister Rogel.' His work was a "pretiosissimum et devotum oratorium," a tabernacle apparently with wings, "tres historias

during the jubilee, where his commendation of the frescoes of Gentile da Fabriano in the Lateran was noted to the credit of the Umbrian artist.* He is supposed to have resided also for a time at Venice,† where his pictures were once numerous; he was unquestionably, after Van Eyck's time, the chief channel of his influence on that city.‡ The date of his decease is unknown; he is last mentioned in 1462.§

Of his paintings, one of the most pleasing, the Adoration of the Kings, is preserved at Vienna; the head of the Virgin is very sweet, and the worshipping Kings very good; the drapery is stiff, the colouring rich. But his most original work that I have seen is one in the Academy at Bruges, of which nothing but the composition has survived the restorer's hand —it has been completely and coarsely repainted; the Virgin and S. Joseph kneel in adoration of the infant Jesus, from whose body light emanates, illuminating

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habens," to wit, the Nativity, the Descent from the Cross and the appearance of Our Saviour to the Virgin after his resurrection—the first instance, so far as I am aware, of the representation of the subject, one of the most striking and interesting in the whole range of art.

* *Facius de Viris Illustribus, &c.*—This sympathy and approval on the part of Roger confirms the opinion that Gentile had profited much by his acquaintance with the Flemish school.

† Lanzi mentions a picture in the possession of the Nani family at Venice, as painted, not on Flemish oak but Italian fir. This test might be advantageously applied in other cases.

‡ I think Basaiti must have been, for a time at least, his pupil.

§ The date of a portrait, said to be of himself, preserved at Venice in the sixteenth century. *Notizie, &c.*, by the *Anonimo*, edited by Morelli, p. 78.

his mother's face, the angels floating and worshipping in the air, and the ox and ass dimly seen in their manger, while in the distance, the angel announcing to the shepherds, although luminous himself, casts no ray upon them,—they are seen by the light of their fire alone. The former of these ideas was therefore no new one of Correggio; he borrowed it from the North,—it had become a standard tradition of the Teutonic schools long before his day.*

Hugo vander Goes was likewise a native of Bruges,† and served as a medium of Van Eyck's influence on Florence, where perhaps his most important work still remains, the altar-piece of the church of S. Egidio, attached to the hospital of S. Maria Nuova, and which he executed for the Portinari family—that of Dante's Beatrice—who seem to have taken the lead in the patronage of Flemish art, at Florence, during the fifteenth century.‡ The subject is the usual one of the Virgin kneeling and adoring the child, around whom angels cluster in adoration, an idea peculiarly Northern, and which is never

* The first idea, indeed, of making the Saviour's body the source of illumination is due to Taddeo Gaddi, who represented it so (*vide supra*, tom. ii, p. 273) in the Resurrection in the Cappella degli Spagnuoli,—but none of the early Italian painters adopted it.

† Vasari calls him 'Hugo d'Anversa,' possibly as a member of the celebrated Academy of Antwerp. But he frequently describes Flemish and even German artists as of 'Anversa,' in the same manner that foreign writers at the present day consider every British artist a native or resident of London.

‡ There is a portrait of Folco Portinari by Hugo in the Pitti palace,—characteristic and very highly finished.

seen in the Italian representations of the Nativity. Here moreover, Joseph and the Shepherds kneel to the right and left of the Virgin, making up the general outline of a composition which was adopted and constantly reiterated by the later Umbrian artists. The execution of the picture is in other respects unsatisfactory; the face of the Virgin is wanting in refinement, the expression of the figures throughout common and inferior, the faces of the shepherds vulgar to caricature,—there is a sort of pout on the features even of the Virgin and the angels, a drawing down of the corners of the mouth which gives them a peculiarly unpleasing aspect,—and this is observable in almost all Hugo's pictures. His still-life accessaries are always admirably painted, —in a picture in the Uffizj we see the oil-cloth carpet reproduced with such zest by the Florentine painters contemporary with Perugino; in an Annunciation at Munich the Virgin's room with its details is given with a minuteness second only, in the century, to the picture described a few pages back, by Van Eyck. Similarly in a Virgin and child seated under a *baldacchino* at Munich, the perspective of the town, seen through the window, is admirable.

His landscape is generally very good, but he is fond of unpleasing extremes; sometimes he offends the eye by introducing rocks of disproportionate magnitude in the centre of a tame middle-ground, reminding one of the impudent sallies of a bashful man,—sometimes he wearies it by the interposition of a broad sea of green foliage between the fore-

ground and the mountains on the horizon. The tall transparent tree, characteristic of the early Northern schools both of Cologne and Flanders, and so constantly repeated by Perugino and his Umbrian pupils, may frequently be seen in Hugo's paintings.

In all these particulars we recognise the successful imitator of Van Eyck, but nothing more; we cannot look upon him as higher than a second-rate painter.

His latter years seem to have been spent at Ghent, where his name occurs in the public records as late as 1480. He had settled there, apparently, about 1467,* on his marriage with the beautiful daughter of the burgher Jacob Weytens; he had propitiated the favour of the father by a portrait of the daughter in the character of Abigail, and her hand was his reward, but he found her heart more difficult of acquisition, and at last gave up the effort and forsook the world for a monastery in the forest of Soignies, where he ended his days.

Roger vander Weyde was an artist of higher powers; he was not a mere copyist, but possessed feeling and originality of his own. His favourite subject seems to have been the Deposition from the Cross; an early specimen may be seen at Florence, interesting chiefly, like every Flemish or German picture of early importation into Italy, as a link between Northern and Southern art; it is inferior to the representation of the same subject at Berlin.

* When he is first mentioned in the records of that city, as superintending the rejoicings at the inauguration of Charles the Bold as Count of Flanders.

Perhaps his finest work is the head of Our Saviour crowned with thorns at Munich, full of dignity, sweetness and feeling, although the type is not well preserved; the drapery is more free than usual, which possibly may be owing to the influence of Italy, which began to be felt in the North during his latter days.—But his most vaunted productions were four pictures of Justice in the Council-hall of Brussels, more especially the one representing a remarkable incident in the early history of the town:—the nephew of Count Archibald, the Governor, had grievously insulted a young woman—the Count had passed a law attaching the penalty of death to the offence in question—he sentenced his nephew accordingly—the Count was on his own deathbed at the time—the people, pitying the youth, concealed him and gave in a false report of his execution—three or four days afterwards, thinking his uncle's anger would be subsided, he made his appearance before him—the Count beckoned him to his bed-side, embraced him, and in so doing, stabbed him to the heart. The people were horror-struck and termed it murder, but heaven interposed—such is the legend—to canonize the deed. The Bishop attended to administer the *viaticum*—the Count made his confession with extreme penitence, but said nothing of his nephew's death—the Bishop reminded him of it—the Count said he had in nowise sinned, having merely performed an act of justice for the love of God—the Bishop refused him absolution and left the house. But he had scarcely crossed the threshold when the

Count sent for him back and desired him to ascertain whether the pyx still contained the consecrated wafer —he opened it, but it was gone—"Look here, then!" said the dying man, "that which you denied me hath of itself given itself to me," and opening his mouth, he showed him the wafer resting on his tongue. This happened about the year 1220.*—It was the former part of the story, the murder of the youth, which formed the subject of Vander Weyde's picture; I believe it still exists, with the rest of the series, but I cannot speak of it from personal recollection.

Roger survived till 1529, when he died, very rich and at a great age, the last and most faithful representative, in the direct line, of the school of John van Eyck.

SECTION 2.—*Hans Memling.*

NONE of the preceding painters can be considered artists of progress or even equal to Van Eyck; the first of this description was Hans Memling, the Memelino of the Italians,† a master whose works unite technical merits of a very high order with a grace, fancy and feeling peculiarly his own. Little is di-

* Baldinucci, in his life of Roger vander Weyde, tom. iv, p. 75, *edit. Manni.*

† Since the publication of Descamps' 'Vies des Peintres Flamands, &c.,' the name has been frequently written with an initial H in lieu of M, that writer having misread the artist's subscription to his works. The M appears in all the early notices, as well as in the modification of the name current in Italy during the first half of the sixteenth century. See the 'Notizie,' &c., of the Anonimo, edited by Morelli, *passim.*

rectly known of him. He was born at or near Bruges,* probably about 1430, and from the resemblance observable in the style of his early works to that of his townsman Roger, and from his first recorded picture being a portrait of Isabella of Aragon, wife of Philip of Burgundy, dated 1450, and preserved at Venice at the beginning of the sixteenth century,† it has been conjectured that he was Roger's pupil,‡ and accompanied him to Italy at the period of the jubilee. This is very possible,—at the same time, the influence of Gerard vander Meire is also perceptible in some of his works,—if personally ex-

* For an argument to identify him with a Hans Hemling born at Constanz in 1439, but which falls at once to the ground if the correct orthography be Memling, see Nagler's Lexicon. His reception (*vide infra*) into the Hospital of S. John at Bruges, into which by an ancient law none could be admitted but inhabitants of Bruges and Maldeghem, further proves him a native of the district.[a] On the other hand, the allusion by Marcus van Vaernewyck in his 'Historie van Belgis, &c.,' 1565, to the ornament that the paintings "of the German Hans" were to the town of Bruges, is not easily explicable. *Nagler.*

† See the 'Notizie, &c.' of the Anonimo, p. 75.

‡ Vasari, in his Introduction and in the life of Antonello of Messina, describes "Ausse" as the "creato di Ruggieri" of Bruges. In the subsequent notice of 'Diversi artefici Fiamminghi,' and in which he confounds Roger of Bruges with Roger vander Weyde, he writes the name "Hauesse." As Baldinucci rightly observes, both "Ausse" and "Hauesse," are evidently misprints for "Ansse" or "Hansse," the Christian name of our artist.—The coincidence of the legend of the reapers occurring in pictures both of Roger and Memling may be worth noticing, as well as the fact that both painters were fond of working in tempera.

[a] See the 'Notices des Tableaux qui composent le Musée de l'Hôpital Civil de S. Jean, à Bruges,' du. 1842.

erted, it must have been before 1447, when that artist died, and consequently before Memling's association with Roger,—this however is questionable, and we can affirm nothing more than the significant fact that Memling was chosen to complete the illuminations of a manuscript which Gerard's decease had left unfinished; were a closer connection proved, it might account for his occasional resemblance to Hubert rather than John van Eyck.—An affinity moreover with the ancient school of Cologne, so marked as to argue direct inspiration at the fountain head, is another characteristic of his works; everything concurs to prove his residence and study there; the type of his head of Our Saviour, the accuracy with which he has depicted the churches of Cologne* and the scenery of the Rhine,† and the features of his figures, so much more German than Flemish, alike lead to this conclusion.—In short, all that was worthiest of perpetuation in the primitive school of Cologne and in its derivative, that of Hubert and John van Eyck, seems to have met and found reconciliation in him.—I think he must also have resided, for a time at least, at Venice; the fact of his works having been more numerous there and at Padua three centuries ago than those of any other *tramontano*‡ can hardly be accounted for otherwise,—

* Especially in the paintings of the 'Chasse de S. Ursule,' presently to be mentioned.—In the 'Seven Joys of Mary,' too, the architecture is throughout Lombard.

† As in the S. Christopher, of which I shall speak anon.

‡ See the 'Notizie, &c.,' *passim*.

although the traffic, indeed, in pictures between the North and the South was carried on even more briskly then than now.

Perhaps Memling worked more in miniature than in large during his early years. The illuminations of the manuscript above alluded to, the celebrated Grimani Breviary, were unquestionably the work of his youth; Gerard had commenced them, and Memling, together with an otherwise unknown artist, Livieno d' Anversa, completed them;* the earlier designs, intensely Flemish, are evidently by Gerard, who in one of them, a winter-scene, in the series representing the twelve months with their appropriate occupations, has introduced his favourite snowy mountains, as in the Crucifixion at Ghent. But the compositions and execution wonderfully improve as we advance through the volume, and those towards the end, by Memling, are worthy of the best days of Flemish art; the figure of the Virgin, especially, in her Coronation, is peculiarly sweet and pure, and the respective groups of the canonized Popes and female Saints are beautiful. The parallelism of the Old with the New Testament, originally the birth of the catacombs, but which Germany had adopted with peculiar delight, is frequently introduced,—I may instance the Resurrection, which is faced by a miniature of Samson carrying off the gates of Gaza, while

* "Fu imminiato da *molti maestri* in molti anni. Vi son imminiature de Zuan Memelin, carte ——, de man de Gerardo de Guant carte 125, de Livieno da Anversa carte 125." *Notizie, &c.*, p. 77.

the spirit of the former and more direct representation is beautifully illustrated by the sunrise in the background. The landscape is generally pleasing, with the beetling top-heavy rocks characteristic of the early Northern painters and from them imitated by the Italians; the colouring is warm and roseate rather than brilliant,—and perhaps the more pleasing to the eye in consequence.

This Breviary has a little history of its own to enhance its interest. There is no authority for supposing it executed in Italy; it was in all probability imported on speculation by M. Antonio Siciliano, from whom, we are told, the Cardinal Domenico Grimani purchased it for five hundred sequins, an enormous sum in those days. He bequeathed it to the republic of Venice, but with a life-interest in it in favour of his nephew Marino, Patriarch of Aquileja. On the death of the Cardinal it disappeared, but was recovered by the Patriarch Giovanni Grimani, for which service the Senate permitted him to retain it in his possession, after the death of Marino, during his life-time.* It is now in the Library of S. Mark's, splendidly bound, with the arms of the original donor on the sides—enshrined in a case of cedar like another Iliad, and guarded—I will not say like the golden apples of the Hesperides, but, to use his own comparison, like a tender and lovely daughter by the venerable librarian, whose kindness and courtesy in indulging me with a long and minute

* Notes of Morelli to the 'Notizie, &c.,' p. 226.

examination of it live gratefully in my remembrance.*

Of considerably later date—displaying the influence of Cologne superadded to that of Vander Meire and of Roger of Bruges, fused and reconciled

* Among the pictures of Memling which exhibit the influence of Roger of Bruges and of Cologne, and which I therefore venture to consider early works, I may name the following,—The Virgin and child in the gallery of the Uffizj at Florence—exquisitely finished, the Virgin stiff and prudish, the throne laid down with a rich carpet or oil-cloth:—The Marriage of S. Catherine in the Museum at Cologne—earlier in manner and making more display of brocade, &c. than the picture representing the same subject at Bruges; the landscape too is inferior to his maturer style, and the heads are not so beautiful, but they exhibit much truth and expression, and the colouring is very rich:—Melchizedek giving the bread and wine to Abraham, at Munich—the former an excellent figure, the latter somewhat caricatured; the cavalcade and the landscape in the background resemble that in the Seven Joys of Mary, but the horses are not so good,—and the Gathering of Manna in the Wilderness, also at Munich and forming (it is supposed), with the preceding picture, part of a series of compositions symbolical of the Lord's Supper, and to which two pictures at Berlin representing Elijah awakened by the Angel and the Passover (attributed to Memling but assigned by Dr. Waagen to Roger of Bruges) are also supposed to belong:—The Head of Our Saviour at Munich—dignified but rather too full, and varied from the type; a Hebrew inscription appears on the collar, as in the pictures of the school of Cologne,—there is also in the same gallery a Head of Christ crowned with thorns, full of feeling:—Our Saviour walking on the banks of the Jordan, with the Baptist on the opposite shore directing a kneeling devotee towards him, similarly reminding one of Cologne:—And lastly, his own portrait, dated 1462, in the possession of Mr. Rogers.[a]

[a] The Anonimo edited by Morelli mentions a portrait of Memling by himself then (1521) at Venice, from which it appeared that he was about sixty-five when it was painted, "piuttosto grasso che altramente, e rubicondo," p. 76.

into harmony by a master's mind and hand—yet still an early picture, the 'Seven Joys of Mary,' preserved at Munich, has an especial claim on our attention, not merely on account of its intrinsic beauty, but as one of a class of church-paintings in which incidents innumerable, dependent on one central composition, are introduced in detached groups to the right and left and in the background, not separated by distinct compartments but dispersed through an immense landscape,—with the view, apparently, of serving as a perpetual commentary on the preacher's words while narrating the history to which they bear reference. The idea was Byzantine originally, and had been introduced into Italy by the Sienese school, but being less suited for fresco than for small easel-paintings, it had never been adopted by the Giotteschi.* The invention of oils, however, almost implied that adoption; Van Eyck's Adoration of the Lamb led the way, and we can trace the gradual development of the style in the pictures of Vander Meire, Roger of Bruges and Vander Goes, from which Benozzo Gozzoli and the early Florentine and Umbrian painters of the Second Epoch, posterior to Masaccio, introduced it even into fresco. Memling, however, carried it to perfection—so far as we may apply the term to a style extremely pleasing indeed, but far from consonant to the proprieties of art—and from him, apparently, it

* The nearest approach to it, in that branch of Italian art, is in the cupola of the Baptistery of Padua, described *supra*, tom. ii, p. 333.

was last of all introduced into the school of Leonard at Milan.—In the meanwhile the 'Seven Joys' in question and the Passion of Our Saviour in the Cathedral at Lübeck are the most remarkable works of this description by the hand of Memling, and through the former, especially, you may travel for an hour or more with as much delight as through the picture of the Fathers of the Desert by Pietro di Lorenzo at Florence,—the same simplicity, the same freshness, the same variety of character and action animate them both.

The scene of representation is an immense bird's-eye landscape, extending over city, sea and mountain, embracing Egypt, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Emmaus, Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee and Chaldæa, in glorious disdain of geography, and traversed in every direction by interminable winding roads, wiling the eye onward and enhancing the idea of illimitable distance. The whole of this vast space is filled with detached groups of small figures, representing the successive incidents of happiness in the life of the Virgin, omitting those which occasioned pain;* two streams traversing the middle and foreground divide it pretty equally into three portions,—the first, to the left, comprising the history from the Annunciation to the Adoration of the Shepherds, and in the

* The name by which this picture is commonly known is scarcely correct, more than one of the 'Seven Joys of Mary' being omitted; they are usually reckoned as the Annunciation, Visitation, Nativity, Presentation, the Finding of Our Saviour in the Temple, the Assumption, and the Coronation.

background, the Massacre of the Innocents and the Flight into Egypt; the central, the Journey of the Three Kings, their Interview with Herod, their Adoration (the principal and prominent composition in the picture) and their Return to their own country; the third, the Resurrection and subsequent history of Our Saviour, the Descent of the Holy Spirit and the closing incidents in the life of the Virgin, — while in the remote horizon, on three isolated mountains of Chaldæa, the three kings are seen watching apart, like their predecessors of a thousand years, for the appearance of the star that was to arise out of Israel; two of them are still kneeling, the one in the middle has sprung up exultingly to greet it, as it blazed suddenly forth over Jerusalem.*

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* After familiarising the eye with the general arrangement it may be found agreeable to examine the successive scenes in epic or dramatic order; they may be appropriately divided into five cantos or acts, as follows:—

I. *From the Annunciation to the Adoration of the Shepherds. —Beginning at the extreme left of the picture, and descending towards the foreground.*

1. The Annunciation to the Virgin—in her chamber; in the usual style of the school of Van Eyck.

2. The Annunciation to the Shepherds.

3. The Virgin adoring the new-born child reposing on her mantle—Joseph standing, looking on, shadowing the candle—two devotees (whose emblazoned shields are hung on the wall behind them) kneel at a grated window, looking in, and the Shepherds are coming through the arch.

II. *Including the history of the Three Kings, from their watch in Chaldæa to their Departure from the Holy Land. Beginning in the extreme background, and filling the whole central part of the picture.*

1. The

Of all these compositions, the central one, representing the Adoration of the Three Kings, is the

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1. The Three Kings watching on their respective mountains.

2. Their Voyage towards Palestine—the vessels seen approaching on the distant Sea of Galilee.

3. (Towards the left.) The Cavalcade of the Three Kings arriving from the East at the same moment of time by three different roads,—they join company and proceed together, the Kings riding in front, preceded by their respective heralds bearing their emblazoned banners.

4. Their Reception by Herod, in the court of his palace at Jerusalem.

5. (Seen through a window of the palace.) Herod consulting the Chief Priests respecting the birth of the King of the Jews.

6. The Kings proceeding to Bethlehem, riding side by side, preceded as usual by their banner-men,—approaching the shed, which is repeated, nearly in the centre of the picture, they separate so as to come round in two divisions.

7. The Adoration.

8. Their departure—in an opposite direction, as warned by God—and riding together as usual.

9. Their Embarkation.

10. Their voyage home, towards the rising sun, significative at once of the East, and of the new birth of Creation.

11. Herod standing on the shore, too late to detain and gazing after them.

III. *Including the Flight into Egypt and incidental circumstances.—To the left of the picture.*

1. The Massacre of the Innocents, commanded by Herod in his disappointment, who at the same time sends a party in quest of the Virgin and child.

2. The husbandmen sowing and reaping the corn, the two operations separated by a tree,—the reaper points towards Egypt in answer to the inquiry of the soldiers.

3. (Far in the distance.) The Virgin and child seated under the palm-tree and plucking the dates which, according to the legend, it bent down to offer them,—Joseph at the same time draws water from the brook which burst out spontaneously for their use.

4.

most important, whether we consider the correctness of the design, the variety of movement and incident, or the truth, dignity and beauty of the expression; the composition is copious without confusion, and thoroughly German without compromise of grace; the dog couching in front is excellent,—Memling was as fond of introducing it as John van Eyck; the

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4. Two men, one with a sword, followed by a dog, walking further on,—I do not know to what this refers.

5. (Furthest of all.) The idols falling off their pedestals (in the temple of Hermopolis) on the arrival of Jesus Christ, the true God, in Egypt.

IV. *The history of Our Saviour from the Resurrection to the Ascension.— To the right of the picture.*

1. Christ's Resurrection—standing in front of the cave, blessing and with the banner of the cross, the wound seen in his side —quite in the early Cologne style.

2 and 3. The 'Noli me tangere,' and the two women approaching the sepulchre.

4 and 5. The journey to Emmaus and the breaking of bread at supper there.

6. Our Saviour's appearance to the Apostles on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

7. The Ascension.

V. *The Descent of the Holy Ghost, and the subsequent history of the Virgin.— To the extreme right.*

1. The Descent of the Holy Spirit—seen through an open arch within a vast building,—on the outside, a female devotee (the wife probably and mother of those on the opposite side) kneeling in front, her coat of arms held by a monkey, apparently as the 'tenant' or 'supporter' in heraldry.

2. Our Saviour's appearance to the Virgin, kneeling, when he granted her two requests, that in dying she might not see the devil, and that the Apostles might all be present at her death.

3. The Death of the Virgin, attended by the Apostles.

4. Her Assumption—carried up by angels, crowned, towards God the Father, who blesses and receives her into glory.

horses are full of life and fire, and the figures and attitudes of the attendants, especially of the groom leaning his hand on his master's steed as it stoops to drink, are most admirable, yet without caricature or extravagance, and the minuter details are subordinated to the principals with strict relative propriety. —Nor are the smaller compositions less excellent when closely examined. Naiveté and deep religious feeling characterise them all; the heads of Our Saviour and the Virgin are excellent throughout, and the landscape, although inferior perhaps to Memling's later efforts, has a peculiar charm, a freshness as of spring,—the water too is most transparently painted. The architecture is not Gothic, but Lombard throughout, without exception, even in the temple of Jerusalem, and copied apparently from that of Cologne, where he may not improbably have been living at the time he painted the picture.*

I should think the 'Seven Joys of Mary' of earlier date by several years than the Passion of Our Saviour at Lübeck,† painted in 1471,—a picture full of merit, but deficient in the nameless virginal charm of its predecessor. It is much larger too, which may similarly affect the mind. When shut

* The 'Sieben Freuden der Maria' have been beautifully engraved in outline, in three large sheets, by E. Schaeffer.

† In one of the side-chapels of the Dom-Kirche. The Baron von Rumohr, I believe, first recognised it as a work of Memling. Independently of the internal evidence, there are many minute coincidences with the 'Seven Joys of Mary,' particularly in the background.

up, the wings represent the Annunciation, full-length figures strongly resembling those of the altar-piece of Ghent; when half opened, four Saints appear, S. Blaise, the Baptist, S. Jerome and S. Egidius, with their respective emblems, excellent figures, with heads full of expression; when fully unfolded, we behold, in about twenty groups, dispersed through an immense landscape, the whole history of the Passion and the forty days, from the Agony in the Garden to the Ascension,—the Crucifixion occupying the centre, with the Procession to Calvary and the Entombment and Resurrection correspondently prominent in the wings to the right and left, respectively. Here too the poetry of the sky is very remarkable,—in the left wing, of preparation, the heavens are red and lurid; in the central compartment the sun and moon appear on either side the cross, but faintly, obscured by a heavy cloud which broods over the scene; while, to the right, the sun rises, glowing and young, behind the Resurrection. It is a pity this picture is not better known; although of considerable size, it is most minutely finished, yet without the least sacrifice of freedom; the composition is excellent,—the heads, though without much elevation, are full of variety and characterised by the utmost truth and expression; the hands are peculiarly well drawn, the drapery is broken, but less rigidly so than usual, and the colouring is browner and more vigorous than in the picture at Munich.*

* To the description in the text I may add, that the head of

Two pictures of the Nativity, one at Berlin, the other at Munich, and both singularly beautiful, appear to me to belong nearly to the same period as the 'Passion,' or at least more nearly so than the few remaining works I intend to notice. In the former, the Virgin, a very sweet figure, kneels adoring the child, in company with Joseph, three angels and a devotee,* but the peculiarity of the picture consists in its representing the revelation of the Saviour to the East and West in the respective wings —in the one, the Tiburtine Sibyl pointing out to Augustus the vision of the Virgin and child in heaven, in the other the three Kings, at the close of their watch of centuries, adoring the star, in the centre of which is seated the infant Saviour.—The other picture, at Munich, represents in the central compartment Memling's favourite subject, the Adoration of the Kings,—it abounds in minute details, rich brocades, a crystal glass, a rose-tree and flowers, &c., resembling the manner of Roger of Bruges and John van Eyck, while that of Cologne is equally apparent in the wings, of which the one represents

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Our Saviour, as in all Memling's pictures, strikingly resembles that of Wohlgemuth and of the old school of Cologne,—that the figure holding a spear, whose head is seen last but one to the right, in the central compartment, is supposed to be a portrait of Memling himself,—that the horses are full of spirit—and that the drapery, armour, &c., are painted carefully, but with less prominence than in Memling's earlier pictures.

* To wit, "Bladelin, Gründer der Stadt Middelburg," who died in 1472,—which determines the date of the picture as not later at least than that year. Dr. Waagen attributes it to Roger of Bruges. *Rathgeber*, p. 108.

the Baptist with the lamb, standing in a landscape bounded by blue mountains, bright in the early daybreak,—the other S. Christopher crossing the river with the infant Saviour on his shoulders—an exquisite little picture, in which the eye, escaping from a narrow gorge of rocks, pursues the receding Rhine into the broad moonlight, sleeping calm on the waters and lighting up tower-crowned mountain and projecting promontory, one beyond the other, till lost in distance.

We have now reached the year 1477, an important epoch in Memling's history. He is supposed to have attended Charles Duke of Burgundy on his disastrous expedition to Switzerland, and to have even fought as well as painted for him. Be that as it may, it is certain that he returned in that year to Bruges, wounded and destitute, and was received into the hospital of S. John, where the attentions and skill of the brotherhood gradually restored his health. He continued to reside there for several years, and in requital of their care and kindness, painted for them gratuitously the beautiful series of pictures still religiously preserved in the hospital.*—Of these the 'Chasse' or reliquary of S. Ursula, if not the most beautiful, is the most celebrated; it is shaped like a miniature ark or chapel, and painted on the lid and

* No payments for any of them occur in the books of the establishment; the sole entry connected with them is the discharge of the carpenter's bill for making the 'Chasse.' See the *Notices des tableaux du Musée de l'Hôpital Civil de S. Jean, &c.*, p. 12.

sides with the history of the Saint and her eleven thousand virgins—a series of exquisite miniatures, though hardly equal, it strikes me, to his earlier works in that style; the last, the Death of S. Ursula, is the best,—she stands resolved, but looking tremblingly aside, her hand held up, as if to ward off the arrow that a soldier is deliberately aiming at her; the man in authority, superintending (though with a thrill of horror) the execution of his orders, and the surrounding figures, are full of varied expression.*

But the Marriage of S. Catherine, painted in 1479, will linger longer on your memory. The Virgin and child are seated on a rich throne, with S. Barbara on one side and S. Catherine on the other, each on a seat of lower elevation; the infant Saviour puts the ring on the finger of the latter; two little angels hover over the Virgin, supporting her crown, a third holds a book for her to read from, a fourth plays a small organ,—John the Baptist and John the Evangelist stand on either side of the throne,—the composition of this group is as symme-

* The subjects are as follows:—1. The arrival of the fleet before Cologne—where the Cathedral and other buildings are easily recognisable; 2. The Debarcation at Basle; 3. The arrival at Rome; 4. The arrival at Basle preparatory to re-embarkation for Cologne; 5. The Martyrdom of S. Ursula's companions; 6. Her own Death; 7 and 8, at the two extremities of the 'Chasse,' S. Ursula, holding the arrow and sheltering a crowd of virgins under her mantle, and the Virgin and child, the latter holding a fig.—On the lid, in front, S. Ursula and her companions, attended by angels,—behind, the Coronation of the Virgin. These paintings have lately been lithographed and published in a folio volume at Bruges.

trical as in the old Italian paintings, although quite Flemish in character; the Virgin's head is full of sweetness and purity, though (as usual) too full,—that of S. Catherine has an additional charm of meekness, singularly endearing,—those of the two S. Johns are admirable; the Northern artists generally succeed in the Baptist but fail in the Evangelist, who seldom reaches the refined loveliness of the Italian,—here, however, Memling has surpassed his brethren, though representing the beloved disciple as a man, not a youth. The drapery is very broken. The background is a landscape, carried through the central compartment and the two wings, and in this the history of the two Saints is represented in different small groups, beginning respectively from the central compartment and so working off to the opposite extremity, the principal subject of each history occupying the place of honour in its respective compartment,—the Decollation of the Baptist is thus seen to the left, and to the right the Vision of S. John in Patmos; the attitude of the latter is admirable, the head that of matured age, and beautiful; he gazes upwards—pausing as he writes, fearless, but in solemn awe and deep feeling —on the vision of God the Father and the Lamb, the four beasts and the elders, while beyond the sea and along the receding coast of Asia Minor, the four horses of the Apocalypse, the burning mountain cast into the sea, the shipwrecks, the "great hail," the captains and mighty men hiding themselves in the clefts of the rock, the star opening the bottomless

pit, and the gigantic angel standing on the sea and the land and swearing that "there shall be time no longer"—are depicted in fearful succession. In composition and expression this picture is perhaps equalled by the one at Lübeck, but a charm is superadded to which that is comparatively a stranger—a charm as of age grown young again. The heads throughout are full of truth and expression, the draperies rich but duly subordinated, and the whole is animated by a freshness, beauty and delicacy beyond belief.*

Yet it is equalled and even surpassed by the Baptism of Our Saviour, preserved in the Academy at Bruges, Memling's *chef-d'œuvre*, and one of the very loveliest relics of the fifteenth century. When shut up, the Virgin and child and a female devotee with her daughter, a little epitome of herself, kneeling before them, appear on the outside,—the Virgin seated side-ways, and the infant Christ offering a bunch of grapes to the lady; the Virgin is equal to Van Eyck and indeed superior to almost any other of early Northern design—she is very sweet, pure, and almost lovely—no Northern Madonna can be termed absolutely so without injustice to the ideal beauty of Italy; her long hair flows down in rich and undulating waves,—even the child, in his little white shift, is very pretty. But it is in the interior, in the central compartment representing the Bap-

* The visions of the Apocalypse were a much more favourite subject with Northern than Italian artists. Giusto, who represented them in the chancel of the Baptistery at Padua, had many German sympathies.

tism, that Memling has put forth all his strength. The composition is the ancient Byzantine one, which centuries have not been able to improve; the head of S. John is excellent, full of reverence, thin and emaciated with fasting—that of Our Saviour full of feeling—the angels are inferior as usual. Devotees, presented by their patron Saints, kneel in adoration on the wings, their heads fraught with the deepest piety and reverence; the S. John presents the German type in its utmost beauty, the same head so often repeated by Memling, but young, and full of sensibility and sweetness. The background, common to the three compartments, is a beautiful landscape, rocks, trees, a city and distant blue hills; the trees are discriminated with all their diversities of leaf and bark, ivy running up some of them,—the grass, flowers, &c., are done *con amore*,—the ripples and undulations of the water transparent and beautiful.

This and the preceding picture mark, in short, a third epoch in Memling's career, as the Passion at Lübeck does a second, and the Seven Joys of Mary and the Grimani Breviary a first—respectively reflecting the pure and virginal tenderness of early youth, merged and lost for a while in the absorbing energies of active manhood, to reappear at last, mellowed and calmed into the wisdom of charity, after the heart's deep waters have settled into peace, and the spirit born of agony broods over them, nursing into existence a new creation. Such, I have little doubt, was the history of Memling's mind. Pictures, like music, have an inner voice which, fittingly

evoked, reveals the secrets of the hearts that uttered them to posterity.*

Latest in the series of Memling's works in Flanders, were three pictures painted at Louvain, the last of which he is said to have left unfinished on being summoned to Spain, in 1495, to work in the convent-church of Miraflores, near Burgos. To one of these three paintings the two admirable heads of a gentleman and lady praying, now in the gallery of M. vander Schriek, may have belonged; a second still remains in the Cathedral, representing the martyrdom of S. Erasmus, which he has treated with as much propriety as a subject so revolting could admit of,—the agony in the martyr's face is subdued by resignation, and the expression of the surrounding group admirable;† and perhaps the Last Supper,

* Among the productions of this maturer epoch I may also mention the Sibyl Sambetha in the Museum of the Hospital, said to have been the first work painted by Memling after his convalescence, evidently a portrait, hard but good,—the Adoration of the Magi, dated 1479, and a Descent from the Cross, also there,—the S. Christopher in the Academy, a picture with wings, dated 1484, and of much merit, but the colouring is paler and the drapery more broken than usual with Memling, and in its general appearance it resembles the Last Supper, presently to be mentioned, at Louvain,—the Virgin and child, the latter receiving the apple from his mother, with a young man, Martin de Nieuwenhove, adoring them—painted in 1487 and in the hospital of S. John,—and a male portrait, full of expression, dated the same year, in the Pitti palace at Florence.

† A picture undoubtedly by Memling and somewhat similar in subject and composition, the Martyrdom of S. Hippolytus, tied to and torn to pieces by wild horses, may be seen in the Cathedral at Bruges. The stiffness and constraint of the figures would argue it an early picture, but the colouring, much paler

also in the Cathedral and attributed to Memling, may have been the third, left unfinished by himself and completed by a pupil; the general character is undoubtedly Memling's; it is full of feeling and expression, but the draperies are more flowing, an Italian influence seems to mingle with it throughout, and altogether it is by no means equal to his works at Bruges and elsewhere.*

The alleged visit to Spain rests, in fact, on very dubious authority; a 'Juan Flamenco' certainly executed three pictures at Miraflores between 1496 and 1499, of which one represented scenes from the life of John the Baptist and the other the Adoration of the Kings, favourite subjects doubtless of our artist, but we can scarcely assume them as his without stronger proof.† His last known works with a date, on this side the Pyrenees, are two small pictures, painted on the opposite sides, formerly at Bruges and now preserved in the Museum at Antwerp, one of which, representing Our Saviour standing on the globe, marked with the divisions of the three continents, and blessing, is inscribed 1499. After that year nothing more is known of him.—I trust you have not found the preceding details weari-

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than usual, has more resemblance to that of the Sibyl Sambetha, or the S. Christopher.

* An Adoration of the Kings and a Nativity in the Museum at Antwerp, attributed to Memling, resemble this picture in style, exhibiting a mixture of the ancient Flemish and later Italian manner.

† The pictures were probably carried off or destroyed when the monastery was sacked by the French in 1812.

some; these Northern painters are a less interesting race than their Italian contemporaries, yet they have merits peculiarly their own, and those very contemporaries looked upon them with reverence, and in their modesty deemed themselves honoured by their instruction. We shall recognise the influence of this Teutonic development in the works of every one of the great masters of the Second and Third epochs of European art.

After the foregoing notices, a few lines will suffice for summing up Memling's merits. Fertility of invention, originality of thought, a peculiar poetry of imagination, delighting especially in the association of Nature with human action so as to elicit sentiment from that association—a grace of style peculiarly his own—a propriety and good taste which seldom, very seldom, degenerate into the common-place, and never into the offensive—truth and (within a certain limit) beauty of expression—ease and simplicity, not merely in elevated but ordinary action—good drawing, especially in the hands and feet of his figures—drapery, broken indeed, but in his best works less rigidly so than is the case with most of his contemporaries—spirit and character in animal life, and a peculiar freshness in his representation of external nature, and in the grass, herbs, flowers, &c., he scatters profusely over his foregrounds—are characteristics of all his best works; while his delineations of 'still life,' brocade, oil-cloth, crystal, jewels, armour, &c., although duly subordinated, are second in merit to none of the school of Van Eyck,—nor, though de-

lighting chiefly in the free breath of Nature, was he unskilled in linear perspective, of which he has left many pleasing examples. His colouring is manly and vigorous, and exhibits more fusion than that of his predecessors, and he retained from his original master Roger the habit of occasionally working in tempera.

Memling must have had many pupils, judging from the multitude of pictures which exhibit his manner without his peculiar excellences.* These I need not enumerate; but before closing this section I may name—as contemporary with Memling, and in some respects akin to him in the genealogy of art—Israel van Mekenen, or the painter (if the identity with Israel be questionable) of the Resurrection of Lazarus and other works in a chapel of the 'Vierge du Capitol' at Cologne, and of nearly twenty pictures in the Gallery at Munich, chiefly representing subjects from the history of the Virgin. Israel was a goldsmith, and enjoyed the highest reputation for his engravings, the inferiority of which to these paintings constitutes a strong objection to their assignation to his pencil. But, whatever his name, the painter in question

* I am uncertain whether Peter Mares was one of these. There is a picture by this artist at Munich, the *volet* of a Crucifixion dated 1517, representing the Decollation of S. Maurice, of singular merit; the attitude especially of the executioner, touching the head of the martyr, in order to calculate his distance before stepping back and swinging round his double-handed sword for the death-stroke, is excellent in itself, and a valuable document for the history of civilization.

merits emphatic notice as exhibiting, like Memling, a singular union of the characteristics of the ancient schools of Cologne and of Van Eyck, independently of decided individual genius. The former influence predominates in the Resurrection of Lazarus and the remaining paintings in the chapel; they are executed in oils on the wall; the Resurrection and the Transfiguration are the traditional compositions; the attitudes and expression are deficient in dignity, and the landscape is rude; the drapery is very small and narrow, but flowing. On the left wall, under the Transfiguration, six Saints are represented in niches, under a continuous Gothic canopy, in chiaro-scuro, to imitate statues, with kneeling devotees to the right and left,—these are much superior.*

But the pictures at Munich exhibit a far more advanced stage of skill, and are remarkable for the beauty and expression of the heads and attitudes. Twelve full-length figures of the Apostles are excellent, and strongly resemble those of William of Cologne and his contemporaries; the chief fault is in the bad perspective; the historical compositions are more in Van Eyck's manner; I may name the Dedication of the Virgin as peculiarly sweet,—she

* In the Museum at Cologne is a Deposition from the Cross, with ten dependent compartments, painted in 1488, and attributed to Israel; there is truth in the heads, but the expression is weak, the action is constrained, the draperies are stiff and narrow, and the colouring is pale; the face of the Virgin is however very sweet, especially in the Annunciation, and in the small compartment where she stands in a niche with the child, and in the figure of S. Catherine in the compartment corresponding to this last, there is much grace.

ascends the steps leading to the choir of a Gothic Cathedral, while little angels, resembling those of Cologne, sing above the screen; great attention is paid to the draperies and details, but still feeling is uppermost. The Annunciation, Marriage, Visitation and Assumption may also be cited, especially the Marriage, as among the most beautiful works of the century. The S. John seated, discoursing to his disciples, and a Head of Christ, holding the globe and blessing, may also be mentioned as excellent,—the latter is full of dignity.

In these later works, if by the same master, the composition, expression and general style are purely Northern, the draperies broken, the colouring rich, the landscape very fair, and marked by the constant introduction of top-heavy rocks; the details are minutely finished, but the dignity of history is not compromised. Hebrew inscriptions are frequently introduced, as in the pictures of Cologne.

Bartholomew de Bruyn and John de Mehlem, artists of Cologne or its neighbourhood, and who flourished during the first quarter of the sixteenth century, belong to the same category, and exhibit moreover a close affinity with the branch of Van Eyck's school settled in Holland, and most especially with John Schoreel. Their works may be seen at Munich. They are not remarkable for composition or invention, but the heads are truthful and expressive, though not beautiful; the draperies are less stiff than usual; the landscape is usually tame, with the occasional exception of a vast projecting rock, pierced

with a natural gap or fissure; sometimes, as in the works of Hugo vander Goes, an unrippled sea of green trees is interposed between the foreground and the distant mountains, while more frequently the middle ground is occupied by a farm or a windmill, and the trees there and in front are brought comparatively near to the spectator, and consequently take up more space—they are for the most part carefully and correctly painted. The least agreeable feature in the works of this peculiar class of artists occurs in their representations of the Procession to Calvary, in which the Saviour is almost invariably urged forwards by personal violence—a most revolting idea, in every point of view. If I mistake not, this is prominent in proportion as the purely German element preponderates over the Belgic or Flemish in the painter who represents the subject. The propensity to dwell on horrible ideas is in fact involved in the predisposition to Analysis or Individuality, the peculiar characteristic of the Teutonic race.

SECTION 3.—*Quentin Matsys.*

HITHERTO, since the ascendancy of Van Eyck, we have been accustomed to look to Bruges as the centre of Flemish art, but Antwerp gradually took the lead during the latter half of the fifteenth century, and retained the supremacy ever afterwards. Her Academy had been founded in 1436,* and inscription among its members became the great object of am-

* Its statutes, under the title of the 'Brotherhood of S. Luke,' are dated 15 Jan. 1435—that is, 1436. *Rathgeber.*

bition among the artists of the Netherlands during the sixteenth century.

Quentin Matsys was the first great painter of Antwerp,—a remarkable man, of whose real history little is known. He was bred a blacksmith, and was left fatherless at an early age, with a mother dependent on his support; severe illnesses and a feeble constitution disabled him for an occupation so laborious; he had shown exquisite taste in the design of balustrades, gratings and other varieties of ornamental iron-work, and a friend recommended him to study painting,—he applied to it, apparently, without a master, forming himself on the works of the school of Van Eyck, and soon rose to excellence. A more romantic version of his history attributes the change to his attachment to the daughter of a celebrated painter, who loved him but refused her hand unless he would exchange his trade for the more dignified profession of her father. The story has been discredited *in toto*, since it cannot be traced beyond the well-known line inscribed a century afterwards on his tomb,

"Connubialis amor de Mulcibre fecit Apellem."

But that very line must have been founded on some local tradition.

Were Quentin to be judged by such of his works as are best known, he would rank lower in art than any of the preceding painters. The delineation of the passion of avarice seems to have been his especial forte; his pictures of goldsmiths, money-changers, usurers, &c., are numberless and in their way most

excellent, in the expression of the figures no less than in the details, in the gold and silver coin, the books, glasses, &c., heaped on the tables and shelves before and behind them, and frequently reminding one of the picture of S. Jerome in his study at Naples.* In his portraits the same vigorous truth is apparent, yet totally free from caricature; a male head in the gallery at Berlin, and one of himself in that of the Uffizj at Florence, are admirable.†

But he attains a higher and unexpected elevation in his Circumcision at Munich,—the heads are certainly common and prosaic, but the composition is excellent, and feeling is diffused throughout sufficient to excuse the extreme minuteness of the silks and brocades; the ceremony takes place in front of an extremely rich altar in a Gothic church,—the donor and his wife kneel at desks opposite each other, to the right and left of the principal group, and the Nativity and the Adoration of the Kings are represented in small, the latter by moonlight, in the background.‡

The great altar-piece in the Cathedral of Louvain§ is of still superior excellence, and betrays the influence of the Cinquecento; the central compartment repre-

* Specimens of this class may be seen at Windsor, Paris, Munich, Dresden, Berlin, &c. He continued to reproduce these favourite subjects long after acquiring his lofty and more classic style in Scriptural and historical composition.

† Some of them strongly resemble those of Leonard da Vinci, Francia and others of similar character in Italy.

‡ The pictures representing S. Bartholomew and the two S. Johns—S. Barbara, S. Christina and the Magdalen, were the wings to this picture.

§ Now in the chapel behind the great altar.

sents the Holy Family, the Virgin, holding the child, and S. Anna seated side by side in front of an arched loggia, through which appears a distant landscape, while Joseph, Elizabeth and other figures stand or sit to the right or left. The drapery is less broken, the heads are common, but the figures have a sort of clumsy dignity about them which makes its impression on the spectator.

But this altar-piece is far excelled by that of the Cathedral of Antwerp, Matsys' *chef-d'œuvre* in historical composition, painted in 1508 for the Company of Joiners, and now preserved in the Academy. It represents a Pietà; the dead body of Our Saviour, much attenuated, reclines on the ground, the head supported by Joseph of Arimathæa, who has just taken off the crown of thorns and given it to Nathaniel,—the Virgin leans over her Son, supported by S. John; the two other Maries stand near her. None of the faces are beautiful, but they are imbued with the deepest feeling, the intensest suffering, repressed however within the limits of pictorial beauty and propriety, and quite free from exaggeration or caricature; in the background, at the mouth of the tomb, under the hill, appear three figures, one with a candle, the light of which falls on their faces; they come forward as if to say, "All is ready." The influence of Italy may be recognised to a certain extent in the composition, in the design of Our Saviour's body, and in the drapery, much more flowing than usual, but not a particle of Quentin's national or individual character has been compromised, and

the hardness and stiffness of his early style still remain. The heads are full of truth and admirably painted, and have even been compared by competent judges to those of Leonard da Vinci and Raphael.* In the wings, especially in that to the right, representing the immersion of S. John in the caldron of boiling oil, Quentin's inveterate propensity breaks out again,—every figure is caricatured; the two executioners in front are excellent in their way.†

Beauty, however, may yet be reckoned among his merits, in virtue of the heads of Our Saviour and of the Virgin in the same gallery, at Antwerp. The former, especially, is admirable; he holds the cross with his left hand, blessing with his right, and looking straight forward, the features and expression full of dignity and divinity—a calm solemn beauty which stops the breath as you gaze at it. The Virgin is less satisfactory, the type being quite Flemish though very pure, sweet and modest,—she might have been such if born in Flanders. The finish of her crown and of the gold cross carried by Our Saviour is exquisitely delicate.

It is an interesting but as yet unsettled question, where Quentin acquired this latter style, so superior in aim and attainment to that of his youth. It does not appear that he ever visited Italy, so that we are

* By Sir Joshua Reynolds, Passavant, Rathgeber, &c.

† This picture was purchased in 1577 from the Company of Joiners by the town of Antwerp for 1500 gold florins, by the advice of the painter Martin de Vos. The price originally paid to the artist was 300.

reduced to ascribe it to the study of the works of Leonard and other great Southern painters, imported into Flanders, although he was the sole Northern artist who preserved his originality uncompromised, or rose instead of sinking through such intercourse. He stands, in fact, by himself in Flemish art, peculiar and alone; his pupils were inferior,* and nothing save his somewhat yellowish colouring seems to have descended to his successors at Antwerp. He survived to a great age, and died, like Roger vander Weyde, in 1529, nine years after introducing Albert Dürer to the grand entertainment given to that master by the painters of Antwerp on his visit to the Netherlands.†

SECTION 4.—*Mabuse, Van Orley, and the Italianisers of Antwerp.*

WE have now reached the summit of the mountain, and the descent will be rapid. We have traced the school of Van Eyck in Flanders in its rise and progress, self-developed, independent and original, and exerting, as I have repeatedly mentioned, a powerful influence on Italy, while unsusceptible, it would seem, of any in return, even in the case of such of its members as habitually resided in that country. But the commencement of the sixteenth century

* Besides his son John, who adopted the new Italian style, Maxing or Maximin, of Basle, and Marinus were imitators, if not pupils of Quentin; a painting by the former may be seen at Munich, and one by the latter at Dresden.

† He was then the oldest and most distinguished member of the Brotherhood of S. Luke at Antwerp.

witnessed a total change; the amalgamation having taken place in Italy, the benefit extractable from the productions of the North having been fused (as it were) into the constitution of Italian painting, she reached perfection almost at a bound, without effort and as if by natural necessity, and this even to the conviction of the Northern artists themselves, who one and all fairly threw themselves into her arms, abjured the traditions of their forefathers, and sank into a race of imitators and copyists,—it was not so much a reaction as a revolution, entailing utter poverty and debasement of spirit on those who brought it about. This took place nearly at the same time in all the different Northern schools, in Holland and in Germany no less than Flanders, and the works of each of the great parents of this period of decadence fall consequently into two classes, according as they were painted before or after undergoing the influence of Italy; those belonging to the former are often most admirable, of the latter the less said the better. —It is difficult to ascertain the inner cause of this strange vicissitude; it may be found most probably in the gradual cooling of the Imagination in the North, even in those countries where the Reasoning principle was too weak to ensure the adoption of Protestantism.

John de Mabuse, in the first instance, and Bernard van Orley, in the second, were the leaders in this movement in Flanders.* Mabuse had attained

* Louis Guicciardini (nephew of the historian) describes Mabuse as the painter "qui omnium primus ex Italiâ in has

great previous excellence in his native style,—I may cite his portrait of the children of Henry VII. at Hampton Court, probably painted about 1496 or 1497,* and the Holy Family at Munich, a small picture but very pleasing; the Virgin and S. Anna are seated in front of a rich niche of mingled Cinquecento and Gothic architecture, the costumes, colouring, &c. excellent, the draperies very stiff. But the Lamentation of the Virgin in the Museum at Antwerp is perhaps his best painting; she is supported by S. John, the Magdalen and the two other Maries; the heads are Northern, expressive rather than beautiful, but that expression is most touching, the intensest grief but subdued; the colouring is excellent, the flow of the drapery betrays the influence of Italy, but near the ground the broken style of the North comes out again; it seems to mark the moment of transition, his pause on the top of the hill.†

After his studies in Italy he completely changed his style; allegory and the naked became his favourite pursuit—Noah in his drunkenness, Adams and Eves,

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oras invexit rationem illam quâ in historiis et fictionibus poeticis depinguntur effigies nudæ." *Belgicæ &c. Descriptio*, tom. i, p. 186, *edit. Amst.* 1635.—The common date of Mabuse's birth, 1499, is widely wrong; he painted in England as early as 1495.

* No particulars are known of his visit to England. Pictures by his hand exist in various English collections, at Wilton, Corsham House, Castle Howard, &c.—See Mrs. Jameson's most valuable Handbooks to the Public and Private Galleries in England, *passim*.

† The Archangel Michael, with a kneeling devotee—and a Crucifixion, both at Munich, may also be mentioned with praise; the latter especially has many merits and many defects.

Danaes and Amphitrites, the cherished subjects of his pencil, and in treating these, he presumed to emulate the smile of Leonard and the muscles of Michäel Angelo, uniting with them the minute details of ornament inherited from Van Eyck. The Virgin and child, dated 1527, at Munich, is one of the least offensive specimens of this latter style.*

I do not know whether his residence at Rome corrupted him—it was an ordeal few could pass through—but his character, as handed down to posterity, is that of a spendthrift and debauchee, the type of a class much too common among artists during the last three centuries, few of whom have pitted their genius against their improvidence so successfully. The following anecdote illustrates this. While Mabuse was in the service of the Marquis vander Veren, the Emperor Charles V. signified his intention of honouring that nobleman by a visit; the Marquis determined to array his whole suite in white damask; the tailor made the round of the establishment accordingly, but when it was Mabuse's turn to be measured, he begged that the stuff might be given to himself, that he might make it up into a picturesque costume of his own devising; he sold it forthwith, spent the price at the tavern, and painted

* The Deposition, the great altar-piece at Middelburg, now destroyed, probably partook of this character. It was begun about 1515 and finished before 1520, when Albert Dürer visited Middelburg expressly to see it and make acquaintance with the painter. Albert remarks in his diary that it was better painted than designed. *Rathgeber.*

a robe of paper to imitate damask, in which he made his appearance when the important day arrived. The household, duly marshalled, marched in procession beneath a balcony where the Emperor sat with his courtiers,—Mabuse walked between a poet and a philosopher, like himself, pensioners of the Marquis, —the beauty of the damask struck every one; presently the banquet was served, and Mabuse waited at table; the Emperor could not detach his eye from the damask robe, not a little doubtless to the embarrassment of the wearer, and we may imagine his trepidation when summoned to approach the Imperial chair, that his Majesty might examine its texture more closely; meanwhile, however, the trick had been whispered to the Marquis, and the latter communicated it to the Emperor, and Mabuse retired under cover of the Emperor's hearty fit of laughter on discovering the deception.—But the time invariably arrives when the wit sinks into the sot; what had been bad at first grew worse and worse, and Mabuse's conduct latterly became so lax that the magistrates of Middelburg condemned him, it would appear, to permanent imprisonment, with permission however to work at his art, which he exercised accordingly till his death, in 1533.

Van Orley's character was much more reputable, and his story may be told more briefly. He went early to Italy, studied under Raphael during the latter years of that master's life, adopting his manner to the utmost of his power, and after his return to the North, was much employed by Charles V. in

painting great hunting-pieces and similar designs, as cartoons for tapestry. His latter works are very inferior, but there are both beauty and expression in some of those done in his early youth, among which I may specify S. Norbert's refutation of the heretic Teuchlin at Antwerp, and the S. Luke taking the likeness of the Virgin, now the altar-piece of the Cathedral at Prague.*

From these two painters descended two of the great lines of succession in the later Flemish school, all Italianisers and settled as their head-quarters at Antwerp—that of Mabuse including Lambert Lombard, (perhaps more correctly to be entitled its founder,) Francis Floris, (surnamed the Flemish Raphael,) William Key, Martin de Vos, Lucas de Heere, Abraham Bloemaert, the Porbuses and the Francks—that of Van Orley boasting the names of Michael Coxcie and Gaspar Crayer, the nonagenarian contemporary of Rubens,—while a third line or branch of which Rubens became the representative, and which includes his contemporaries and satellites, Jordaens and Van Balen, descends by a distinct channel through Adam van Oort, of Antwerp, and Otto Venius, of Leyden, a pupil of Frederic Zucchero.—Of Rubens I shall speak, with due but discriminating respect, hereafter, but the intermediate herd—like that encountered by Dante between the gate of hell and the river Acheron—may be glanced at and passed by without injustice, in

* Originally painted (I believe) for the Company of Painters at Malines. The wings are by his pupil Michael Coxcie.

accordance with my principle of dwelling only on artists of influence, whether for good or evil, on posterity. Their characteristics may be summed up in few words. The change of style was absolute, the traditions of the native past were broken off altogether. Almost every one imitated Raphael, but the best of them merely attained a superficial resemblance to his manner—to his inner spirit they never penetrated. A mean servility pervades every department of their style; their conceptions, their presentments are almost uniformly vulgar and prosaic, frequently even coarse; they want earnestness,—in expression, they either sin by tameness or exaggeration; even their colouring has lost its pure and cheerful brilliancy, and become sodden and cold—the difference between a sparkling spring and ditch-water.* This may sound severe, but they must be tested, on the one hand by the standard they themselves aimed at and appealed to, the master-pieces of Italy, and on the other by the principles and practice of their own ancestors, which they had apostatized from and despised.—There are particular exceptions doubtless, but very few; some of Coxcie's Saints, of early execution, may be cited as very sweet and beautiful, and in their works of a lower grade than history they often merit very considerable praise; but as a lofty school, self-sustained, and glowing at once with Christian love and national enthu-

* The colouring of Q. Matsys (as before observed) seems to have been much imitated by them.

siasm—and it is of such only, be it remembered, that I at present treat—the inspiration was extinct.*

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* Specimens by most of these artists, fully illustrating the observations in the text, are preserved in the public galleries at Antwerp and Bruges. I may mention the S. Luke painting the Virgin, and the Fall of the Rebel Angels, both by F. Floris, at Antwerp,[a]—the Decollation of S. John the Baptist and other pictures by Martin de Vos in the same collection,—the Deposition and Last Judgment by Francis Porbus in that at Bruges,—several pictures by Otto Venius in the Antwerp gallery, and his Resurrection in the Cathedral of Ghent, &c. &c.—Among the favourable exceptions I would specify a particularly sweet and pleasing head of the Virgin, in the collection of M. Vander Schriek at Louvain, by Claessens—I am uncertain which of that numerous family,—the Temptations of S. Antony by Martin de Vos, in the Gallery at Antwerp, an excellent grotesque picture in the style of his predecessor Jerome Bosch and his successor Teniers, and which I shall refer to elsewhere,—an Assumption in the same gallery by an unknown artist, displaying originality and an awful feeling of the sublimity of the subject; the head of the Virgin is pure and calm, the Father and Son are seen in heaven but indistinctly, red fiery shapes against the yellow glory of the Deity,—the gigantic representation of the same subject by G. Crayer, at Munich,—the S. John preaching in the Wilderness by A. Bloemaert, once in the Orleans gallery, now in Eugland,—the series representing the Triumph of the Church by Otto Venius, at Munich, much superior to the majority of his works,—and finally a very pleasing Holy Family (quite in the *genre* style) by an unknown Flemish painter of the transition, in the gallery at Vicenza.—Among the Flemish artists who adhered longest to the ancient style were John van Hemsen, several of whose pictures may be seen at Munich, all more or less leaning to the Italian taste, while in a Preaching of S. John the Baptist the figures are grouped like Ostade,—Lance-

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[a] In the former, the Saint rests his leg on the two knees of his emblem the ox, which, couching at his feet, supports the easel on which he paints; the latter is crowded with anatomical devils kicked out of heaven by well-fed angels, who need inexpressibles only, with laced coats and powdered heads, to qualify them for service as London footmen.

SECTION 5.— *Van Eyck's School in Holland.*

WE return therefore to the starting-post, the grave of Van Eyck, in order to complete our estimate of his influence, and the history of his school, by a brief review of the rise and fall of the branch settled in Holland, and which was distinguished from the Flemish succession by a more decided predisposition to *genre*, or the delineation of Common Life, and by a warm and peculiar sympathy with the schools of Upper Germany, arising unquestionably from their closer physical and intellectual affinity.* This early Dutch school is known to comparative disadvantage, its best productions having been destroyed at the Reformation.

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lot Blondeel, of Bruges, by whom there is a singular Last Judgment at Berlin, but whose favourite subjects were of a grotesque character,—and Hans Elburcht, or Klein Hansken, whose picture of the Multiplication of Bread in the gallery at Antwerp displays a purer and better style than usual at the period—simple in composition and undeformed by exaggeration and vulgarity. The Good Samaritan in the Academy at Bruges, painted by John Strada or Stradanus, who was born in 1536 and afterwards became one of the imitators and assistants of the Florentine Vasari, might be cited as perhaps the dying effort of the school of Van Eyck.—For a brief notice of the Flemish school in 1587, see the contemporary Description of Belgium by Louis Guicciardini, tom. i, pp. 184 sqq. edit. cit. I cannot conclude without referring, for a much fuller and more minute account of these artists, to the admirable volume entitled 'The Flemish, Dutch and German Schools of Painting,' by the late Bishop James.

* There is a considerable infusion or substratum of Belgic or Celtic blood in the Flemish nation, which ought by no means to be overlooked as a predisposing element in their civil and religious history.

Albert van Ouwater, of Harlem, was its founder, a painter more celebrated for the excellence of his landscape than for that of the figures to which it served as the background. He was excelled by his pupil Gerard van Harlem, who died at the early age of twenty-eight; two of his best works are preserved at Vienna, a Deposition and a very curious picture representing the translation of the relics of S. John to the monastery of the knights of that order,*— many of the figures seem to be portraits, and there is much expression throughout, although a little caricatured. A still higher excellence was attained by Cornelius Engelbrechtsen, of Leyden, an artist of much interest as the master of Lucas de Leyden at home, and as one of the Northern artists whose colouring and aerial perspective (though inferior to that of their brethren in Flanders) were objects of imitation in Italy. At Venice, especially, his works seem to have been in high request; they are not, for the most part, of a very high order, although a few, like the Deposition or Pietà at Munich, and even his Virgin and child at Vienna, a painting which still retains the Northern impress although betraying the counter influence of Italy, are very beautiful.

None however of these primitive Dutch masters can be compared with their Flemish contemporaries, and it was in Lucas de Leyden that the school of Holland first asserted itself as the rival of that of Flanders. This extraordinary man was born in

* The burial of the Saint, and Julian the Apostate burning his bones, are seen in the background.

1494, was a painter at twelve years old, and at fourteen the engraver of a copper-plate which was held to rival the works of Albert Dürer. He contributed much to the advancement of that interesting branch of art, and it is delightful to know that Albert eagerly sought his friendship in consequence, and that the two artists ever continued on the most cordial terms, each communicating to the other his discoveries and progress with a confidence that dreamt not of reserve or jealousy.* Meanwhile Lucas improved in painting day by day; aerial perspective, especially, owed much to him,—the effects of distance as imitable by colour were a constant object of his experiments and practice. It does not appear that he ever visited Italy, but his later works betray the influence of the South, and the palm belongs decidedly to those of earlier execution. Of these, few or none are more beautiful than the Deposition at Paris, a picture of the deepest religious feeling,—the Virgin, although very German, is excellent, a creature of meekness and purity, lost in the abandonment of sorrow; the composition is excellent in its way—one cannot but regret that the ancient traditional one should be ever deviated from; the design is very fair, the colouring rich, though less soft than is usually the case with the early school of Van Eyck, at least in Flanders.—The Pietà, representing Our Saviour crowned with thorns, a single figure, in the

* For the history of Lucas as an engraver, the distinction of his two styles, &c., see Ottley's excellent 'History of Engraving,' tom. ii, pp. 736 sqq.

tribune at Florence, might be ranked along with it in point of expression, although in this the sorrow is agony to a most painful degree, reminding one of the Spanish Morales.

The Dispute of the proto-hermits, S. Paul and S. Antony, as to who should break the loaf, is in a different style admirable; the loaf lies between them, —the disclamatory attitude of the elder hermit, evidently saying, "No, no—I cannot think of it!" and the peaked cap and expostulatory gestures of the younger, are quite a comedy. The ludicrous light in which the adventures of the Fathers of the Desert were looked upon in the Reasoning North is a curious illustration of national, or rather generic character. Lucas had, however, a peculiar propensity to caricature, which intrudes sometimes on scenes where it is less excusable.

His later paintings exhibit a striving after the Italian features and expression, which he seldom reaches. Among the best of them is a Virgin and child at Munich, and an Adoration of the Magi in the Ambrosian Library at Milan.

The quantity Lucas did during his short lifetime, both in painting and engraving, is astonishing, more especially when we discover that he passed the last few years in pain and suffering. After establishing his fame and fortune he undertook a tour or progress through the Netherlands, from motives, partly doubtless of natural interest and curiosity, partly, it would seem, from a vanity which cost him dear in the sequel. His first visit was to Middelburg, to John

de Mabuse, still at that time in the enjoyment of his liberty, and who accompanied him during the remainder of his tour; nothing could be more magnificent than their proceedings,—they journeyed in a vessel which Lucas had fitted out expressly for the occasion,—they gave a sumptuous entertainment to the painters in every town they visited, presiding at the banquet in gorgeous apparel, Lucas in yellow silk and Mabuse in cloth of gold. But Lucas returned home ill,* suspecting that he had been poisoned by the jealousy of some one among his recent guests, and, whether or not this was the case, he was confined to his bed during the rest of his life by an indisposition which continually augmented till it carried him off in 1533, the same year as his friend Mabuse, aged only thirty-nine. During this period of suffering, he still occupied himself with engraving and painting, and when death was at hand, his last request was that he might see the sun and breathe the free air of heaven once more; they carried him out into the garden—he took his last look at nature—they bore him back to his chamber, and he died on the following day.

It was John Schoreel, however, and Martin van Heemskerk that had the chief hand in introducing the Italian taste into Holland, or rather in attempting so to do; they occupy in this respect nearly the same position as John de Mabuse and Bernard van Orley in Flanders; each of them a man of genius, each abjured an original native style for one of imi-

* In 1522 or 1523. *Rathgeber.*

tation and mediocrity. Both were contemporaries, born, like Lucas and Van Orley, within the last ten years of the fifteenth century.

Schoreel's early life was one of adventure and romance. He fell in love with his master's daughter, a girl of twelve years old, and to render himself worthy of her, started on his travels and studied successively under Mabuse and Albert Dürer, visiting every town and artist on the Rhine; he proceeded to Venice, and thence embarked for Palestine, returned to Venice, visited Rome, where he studied Raphael and Michael Angelo and worked for the Dutch Pope, Adrian VI., and ultimately returned home after an absence of many years—to find his mistress married, a circumstance on which it is difficult to condole with him, seeing he had prolonged his absence so unnecessarily. He removed, however, to Harlem and lived there, continually at work and much respected and beloved, till his death of the gout, in 1560.—His best works were destroyed at the Reformation, but some still exist, of great beauty and interest, as forming—more decidedly even than those of Lucas—the link between the ancient school of the Netherlands and that of *genre*, or ordinary life, which has taken its place in Holland during the last three centuries—the link, in a word, between John van Eyck and Gerard Dow. His favourite subject was the Death of the Virgin, of which there are several repetitions; the most beautiful is at Munich,—she lies on her bed, attended by the Apostles and the clergy, in a rich apartment of the sixteenth century;

both composition and expression are excellent, and the details are numberless, all prognosticative of the future school of Leyden; it marks the point of transition between the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Other of his pictures, belonging to this his first and national style, may be admired at Munich;* his own portrait too at Vienna is admirable. In landscape he excels; his top-heavy tower-topped crags, frequently pierced with fissures, his distant hills and air-tints, are beautiful; there are many points of resemblance between his style and that of Hugo vander Goes, Bartholomew de Bruyn and John de Mehlem, of Cologne,—the latter, indeed, is said to have been his pupil. In his Italian manner he imitated Raphael.

Martin van Heemskerk, on the contrary, strove after Michael Angelo and anatomy; he studied at first under Schoreel, although his contemporary, and made such rapid progress as to excite his jealousy; he then proceeded to Italy, and returned with a design improved at the expense of his colouring. His works were innumerable; the best were destroyed at the capture of Harlem in 1572. Martin was still living then, and was permitted by the magistrates to retire to Amsterdam at the commencement of the

* E.g. the Repose in Egypt, (in the background of which the soldiers are seen inquiring of the reapers, as in the paintings of Memling, Roger of Bruges and Gerard vander Meire,) and S. Jerome, meditating on a skull, an excellent picture, full of expression, the drapery broken, yet with more breadth than usual, and well coloured.

siege; he was naturally so timorous that whenever musqueteers marched past his house, he mounted to the top of a tower in order to be out of the way of any chance shot from their artillery. Some of his early pictures display the ancient Northern style in a pleasing manner,*—the latter, more especially when mythological, are atrociously anatomical and vulgar.

Hans Schwartz, pupil of Schoreel and painter of a beautiful Adoration of the Kings at Munich, still retaining the Teutonic spirit, is the last of the succession I need mention here.† By a happier fate than attended the school of Flanders, it died out altogether. While the strong original infusion of Belgic or Celtic blood—mingling with and modifying the Teutonic—in the population of the Southern Netherlands, perpetuated (if I mistake not) the Romanist faith in that country, and thus necessitated the existence of a school of religious painting, in the form at least, if not the spirit—the total proscription

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* Four Saints, the Emperor S. Henry, S. John the Evangelist with S. Catherine beside him, S. Benedict and S. Maurice, in the Gallery at Munich, are works of his best time—very German, and full of expression and character; and six little pictures representing the history of the brothers Ewald, Anglo-Saxon missionaries in Friezeland, though of later date, still retain not a little of his early manner. There is a very singular and characteristic painting by him in the collection at Hampton Court, 'A Vision of Death and the Last Judgment,' described by Mrs. Jameson, *Handbook to the Public Galleries*, tom. ii, p. 313.

† Antony More, pupil of Schwartz, was *par excellence* a portrait-painter, and as such of high merit.

(on the other hand) of art as the hand-maid of religion by Protestant Holland killed her, as it were, upon the spot. High and historical painting from that moment gave place to *genre* and the delineations of common life, and in a very few years all the varied lines in which the Dutch have attained such unrivalled excellence, were in full and independent vigour and activity. The very same irresistible impulse of Reason, the very same spirit of analysis and dissection, which brought about the Reformation and broke up the Catholic church, broke up also the school of Van Eyck, and then re-animated and re-inspired its dissevered members, set them up and started them afresh as so many new and distinct schools and successions:—It is not here that I shall attempt to discriminate and appreciate their merits.

PART III.

SCHOOLS OF UPPER GERMANY.

SECTION 1.—*Predecessors of Albert Dürer.*

RETREATING therefore upon Cologne, and taking our departure anew and in an opposite direction towards another extremity of the circle, let us ascend the Rhine and make acquaintance with the painters of Augsburg, Ulm, Nuremberg, Basle and the other free towns of Upper Germany, a race of artists who, with less concentration and many minute local distinctions, form notwithstanding, in a general point

of view, a separate school, branching from and closely akin to that of Cologne, yet independent both of it and of the school of Van Eyck, in the Netherlands. Albert Dürer is the monarch of this more rugged and mountainous region of Teutonic art, but many noble hearts fight under his banner or raise their own in alliance with him.

Of this gallant company Martin Schöngauer rides foremost, a native of Culmbach, or Colmar, in Franconia, and the earliest painter of note on the Upper Rhine. He was born about 1420, and died the last year of the century.* His paintings are not numerous, and many are scarcely above mediocrity, but the Crucifixion at Vienna—an excellent picture, full of expression if not of beauty—amply redeems his credit; the blue angels, with their feet lost in drapery, hovering in the air in sorrow, are quite in the style of Cologne.† But Martin's fame rested even during his life-time on its true foundation, his engravings; from these he acquired his popular epithet, 'Hubsch Martin,'‡ or 'Handsome Martin,' and

* Of his death in 1499 there can be little doubt,—see Mr. Ottley's 'History of Engraving,' tom. ii, pp. 63 sqq. Mr. Ottley however thinks he was born in 1453.

† There is also an interesting picture, at Munich, of the early instruction of S. Servatius by his father and mother.

‡ His portrait, by his pupil Hans Largkmair,[a] dated 1483, is preserved at Munich; the heavy dull features show that the proverb 'Handsome is that handsome does' must control the interpretation of the epithet alluded to.

[a] There is a Crucifixion by Largkmair at Vienna, worth notice. Another, dated 1504, at Munich, is very inferior and exaggerated.

although we cannot concede to him the invention of that art, it seems not unlikely that he was the first to discern its importance and vindicate its dignity, little appreciated or suspected by the Florentine Finiguerra. Martin's prints became an article of commerce in Italy; they procured him the regard of Perugino,* and one of them, the Temptations of S. Antony, was copied by Michael Angelo while working under Domenico del Ghirlandajo.†

Nuremberg too possessed her early painters,‡ but none of general celebrity prior to Michael Wohlgemuth, the master of Albert Dürer. Michael was born in 1434, and there can be little doubt that he derived his descent as an artist, either directly or indirectly, from Cologne; his Last Judgment, preserved in the Museum there, an inferior and evidently an early work, preserves the same outline of composition as in that attributed to Meister Stephan, and the type of Our Saviour bears not only the strongest resemblance to that of Cologne but to Memling's also, derived from the same source.§ This too is remarkable in a very interesting series of five paintings, representing the Nativity, Agony in the Garden, Crucifixion, Deposition and Resurrection, now at Munich,—inferior and uncouth as regards

* *Sandrart, Die Teutsche Academie*, tom. iii, p. 220.

† *Condivi, Vita di Michelangelo Buonarroti*, p. 5.

‡ Hans Facunde, who flourished in 1397,—Albert Wohlgemuth, (possibly the father of Michael, the master of Albert Dürer,) in 1456,—Hans Pleydenwurff, in 1458,—Hans Beham, perhaps father of the brothers of that name, in 1465, &c. &c.

§ *Vide supra*, pp. 286, 326.

expression, attitude, design, drapery and landscape, the powerful and deeply seated piety of the artist has printed itself on his work, and animated the Saviour's head, especially, although common-featured, with a divine expression attained by few of his compeers. But simplicity and sincerity are the guides to truth and excellence, and Wohlgemuth's career was one of improvement to the last, traceable through a long series of paintings,* to his *chef-d'œuvre* now at Vienna, a very large picture, painted in 1511, and representing, after its guardian wings have all been opened, S. Jerome caressing the lion, with incidents of his history depicted in the background in small detached groups, in the style of Memling. Devotees adore to the right and left, admirable portraits,—nor are the Saints on the *volets* less excellent; the female figures, especially, are very sweet and pleasing.†

* The following rank among the more interesting of the number:—Our Saviour disputing with the doctors, in the Lichtenstein gallery at Vienna; an excellent picture, and an advance upon the works at Munich,— the Virgin and child at Berlin, her head very sweet, as is usual indeed throughout Wohlgemuth's works,—the Crucifixion, the principal altar-piece in the Frauenkirche at Nuremberg,—the picture of the same subject, attached to the fourth pillar to the left in the nave of S. Sebald's,—a third, dated 1485, exhibiting much improvement, even in design, attached to the pillar immediately to the left of S. Sebald's shrine,—the wings to the statue of S. Peter in the choir, representing the martyrdom and some miracles of the Apostle, in four compartments—extremely good, although it is uncertain whether they are by Wohlgemuth himself,—and lastly, a series of Saints, noble and dignified, the wings originally to some large altar-piece, now in the gallery of the Moritz-Capelle, the chapel of S. Maurice, also at Nuremberg.

† There are four principal groups, representing the Saint's

This is by far Wohlgemuth's finest work,*—few contemporary painters have excelled it as regards the mere mechanism of the art, and none in depth and truth of feeling. Albert Dürer's kind heart must have rejoiced the more in contemplating it, that it was evidently by his own example that his aged master had attained such perfection.

Michael survived this triumph of his old age several years, dying at the age of eighty-five, in 1519. Albert had painted his portrait three years previously, a most living likeness, preserved at Munich —a pale and worn but noble artist-like head, very German, under-jawed, with Roman nose and keen grey eye, full of unquenched fire, a small delicate ear, half hid under the tight black cap; every vein

vigils in the desert, his disembarkation in Syria, the lion carrying wood in performance of the duties of S. Jerome's ass, and his escort of the merchants who had stolen the ass to the door of the monastery, where the Saint receives and welcomes them. The wings which immediately cover this central compartment represent, when open—to the left, the three remaining Doctors of the Church—to the right, three Apostles; when shut—to the left, the Emperor S. Henry and Queen Elizabeth of Hungary—to the right, S. Martin and S. Elizabeth. On the inner face of the two outer wings are seen S. Joseph and S. Kilian to the left, S. Ursula and S. Catherine to the right,—and on the exterior, (alone visible when the whole is shut up,) S. Gregory the Great kneeling before the altar, above which the half-length figure of Our Saviour appears, standing half out of the tomb—the old traditional Byzantine Pietà, with the addition of numerous small emblems of the Passion, Judas with the purse, Pilate washing his hands, &c.

* I have not indeed seen the high altar-piece of S. Mary's church at Zwickau, painted, according to Murray's Handbook in 1479, and which Count A. Raczynski considers the best work of Wohlgemuth. *Hist. de l'Art Mod. en All.* tom. iii, p. 194.

and wrinkle is given, yet with a freedom and ease that admits of nothing painful or disagreeable.

I must not omit to add that Wohlgemuth, in conjunction with an artist named Pleydenwurff, designed and (according to some authorities) executed many of the wood-engravings in the renowned Nuremberg Chronicle; I would refer to the large one of the Last Judgment as supporting my belief of his extraction, as an artist, from Cologne,—to that of the Dance of Death for the wonderful life and spirit infused into the skeleton group,—and to the series, *passim*, for the depth and vigour imparted to wood-engraving by the cross-hatchings, which made their first appearance in this venerable volume.*

SECTION 2.—*Albert Dürer, and his School.*

ALBERT, to whose character and works we must now address ourselves, was born at Nuremberg in 1471, the son of a celebrated goldsmith of the same name, and of Hungarian descent, who had settled there nearly a quarter of a century previously, arriving, as his illustrious offspring himself informs us, on the marriage-day of Philip Pirkheimer, the father (I be-

* See Ottley's History of Engraving, tom. ii, p. 755.[a] The prints alluded to in the text will be found at folios 264 and 265 (verso) of the Chronicle.

[a] Since the above was written, Captain Brown, of Manchester, has kindly pointed out to me the fact, that cross-hatchings appear in the wood-engravings of the 'Peregrinatio' of Breydenbach, printed at Mayence in 1486, seven years earlier.

lieve) of Wilibald, the friend and patron of the younger Albert in after years,—and while the youths and maidens of Nuremberg were merrily dancing in honour of the bridal "under the great linden-tree" *—still flourishing, in her eighth century of verdure, in the court of the Reichsveste.

Albert was educated by his father for his own profession, but earnestly desiring to become a painter, the old man placed him with Michael Wohlgemuth on S. Andrew's day, 1486; he studied three years under him, and in 1490 set out on his travels, as usual with youths in Germany, visiting the brothers of Martin Schöngauer at Colmar in 1492. He returned home in 1494,† and married, that same year, Agnes Frey, the daughter of a celebrated mechanician; the two fathers settled the match without consulting him, and the result was wretchedness; she was handsome, but a termagant whom he could not love,—her temper embittered his life and hastened his death, chilling his heart and wearing him out by the continual dropping of an acid and bitter tongue. Few incidents of importance occur in his history after this ill-omened union; he resided at Venice for eight months in 1506,‡ and in the Netherlands from

* "Und auf denselben tag hatte Philipp Birkhaimer hochzeit auf der Vesten, und war ein grosser tanz unter der grossen linden." Quoted from A. Dürer's papers, in Sandrart's *Teutsche Academie*, tom. iii, p. 226.

† Most of the old biographers of Albert Dürer make him visit the Netherlands and Venice during these four years, but this, according to Bartsch, is erroneous.

‡ The alleged cause of the visit, the piracy of his engravings

1520 to 1524, but the whole of the intermediate years, and the three subsequent to his final return and ending in his death, on the 6th of April, 1528, were spent at Nuremberg in the unwearying pursuit of excellence, not merely in painting but in engraving, and even in minor offshoots of the fine arts, seldom watered by the dew of genius like his. In engraving, especially, he made such progress as to acquire an European fame, rivalled only by that of his youthful competitor, Lucas de Leyden. His prints were eagerly bought, and even pirated, in Italy, and his improvements in technical execution contributed much to the excellence of the school of Italian engraving founded by Marc' Antonio on the basement previously laid by Finiguerra, Baldini, Botticello, Pollajuolo and Mantegna. In painting too, his pencil speedily became a sceptre of power to which all Germany did homage, while his pure and noble and amiable character acquired him the esteem and love of every one, from the Emperor on his throne to the humblest artist in his garret.

Nor was he personally unfitted for intercourse with the loftiest and the loveliest of his contemporaries. We may still admire, in his portrait, his calm and noble features, stamped alike with thought and humble dignity, and read a world of chastened wisdom in the sober brightness of his eye,—and

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of the Passion by Marc' Antonio, cannot be the true one, the series not having been published till 1512, and the earliest of the dates inscribed on any of them being 1509. See Ottley's *Hist. of Engraving*, tom. ii, p. 711.

when we invest the mute image with the stately figure and gentle bearing which story tells us belonged to it—with the voice so melodious, the speech so graceful, that men's minds were led captive by his words, and his abstrusest discourses were listened to like eloquent music—with his dignified address to the great and cordial benignity to his inferiors—ever ready to do justice to all men and discover good rather than ill in everything—we may form some faint idea of the mingled admiration and love which a character at once so estimable and so endearing commanded from mankind, and which rendered his acquaintance and regard an object of interest to men of every grade and profession. Independently of the honours paid him by the Emperors Maximilian* and Charles V., and other German princes, Erasmus and Melanchthon sought his friendship in the North, and Raphael in the South, the latter in particular exchanging portraits with him and sending him drawings in return for engravings. His friendship with Melanchthon may have induced his leaning during his latter years towards the Reformed faith. Among

* I need scarcely repeat the well known retort of the Emperor to a nobleman who declined putting himself into a humiliating posture at the Imperial command for the convenience of A. Dürer, "I can make a nobleman of a peasant, but I cannot make an Albert Dürer of a nobleman." It is the earliest apparently of a multitude of similar stories, told of almost every great king and every great painter during the sixteenth century, when the sovereigns of the day were intent all over Europe in elevating themselves from constitutional feudal monarchs into despots, and took every opportunity of insulting power by the praise of genius.

the latest honours paid him was that of ascription into the Council of Nuremberg, shortly before his death in 1528.

His works are difficult to class except chronologically, and luckily the date is inscribed on most of them; some among the earliest are equal to the latest,—they differ chiefly by the superficial and transitory impression of the school or master with whom his attention had last been occupied, and these impressions recur occasionally at distant intervals; no man was more impressible,—his mind was like a lake, stirred by every breath of wind that descends on it through the circumjacent valleys, but its deep individuality always lurks below, and in a short while reascends and resumes its empire over the surface. The following may be briefly enumerated as among his most interesting and characteristic pictures:—

I. The portraits of his father and of himself, painted in 1490 and 1498, in the gallery of the Uffizj at Florence,—another pair, dated 1497 and 1500 respectively, at Munich, the former an admirable head, the drapery more flowing and Italian than usual,—and the portrait of Oswald Krel, also at Munich, painted in 1499, very German and almost verging upon caricature.

II. Several pictures of rabbits—one at Dresden, dated 1502, excellent—and another, with insects, in the Corsini palace at Rome, admirable in every way, and whether viewed close or at a distance.

III. Two wings or *volets*, in the Lichtenstein gal-

lery at Vienna, representing a prince and princess praying, and guarded by their respective Saints, on a gold ground—sweet heads, full of expression.

IV. The Adoration of the Kings, in the tribune at Florence—in his most German manner—the Virgin fat and clumsy, the head of the middle-aged king copied apparently from his own, the drapery very broken, the colouring brilliant but hard, the whole style and execution strongly reminding one of his engravings.

V. The Nativity, with two knights of the Baumgärtner family on the wings—now at Munich—the head of the Virgin inferior, but not so common as in the preceding picture—the knights vulgar, but admirably painted.

VI. The Virgin and child, in the gallery of the Uffizj at Florence, painted in 1506—the child an intensely German one, the Virgin rather better than the preceding—exhibiting altogether an attempt at a larger and more Italian style, in consequence probably of his visit to Venice that year.

VII. The Dispute with the Doctors, 1506—in the Barberini palace at Rome,—the head of Our Saviour young and sweet, those of the old men from nature and expressive; that to Our Saviour's left is hideous.

VIII. Adam and Eve, 1507, now at Mayence,—a favourite subject of the German artists, inherited from Van Eyck.

IX. Portrait of a youth, 1507, at Vienna,—excellent.

x. The Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand Saints, (at Alexandria, under Hadrian,) 1508—painted for Duke Frederick of Saxony, afterwards obtained by the Emperor Rudolph II., and now at Vienna,—a most curious picture, distinguished by its good design and flowing drapery, betraying the influence of Italy, and by the softness and richness of its colouring; the landscape is very peculiar, the vast fissured rock resembling those in the pictures of Bartholomew de Bruyn, John de Mehlem, &c., while the oval representing heaven reminds one of the old Byzantine paintings and of a picture, of inferior interest in itself, the Gathering of Manna, by Martin Schöngauer, in the Louvre. Dürer and his friend Pirkheimer stand in the middle, the former holding a small banner on which his name is inscribed.*

XI. The Trinity, 1511—Albert's *chef-d'œuvre*—presented to the Emperor Rudolph in 1600 by the town of Nuremberg, and now at Vienna. God the Father, seated on the rainbow, is represented holding forth the Son Crucified, while the Dove hovers above them—slightly varied from the ancient traditional Byzantine composition; angels float above, carrying the instruments of the Passion, the company of Saints and Martyrs attend to the right and left, and below are assembled a countless company of the Doctors, Bishops and pillars of the Church; the female heads are very German, but those of the

* There is some resemblance also between this picture and that by Cima da Conegliano, representing the same subject, at Venice.

male Saints are often singularly noble,—still a few occur of very extraordinary character, describable only by the epithet 'queer,' if not positive caricatures. The whole of this vast scene is laid in the sky; a landscape appears below, with the figure of Albert Dürer himself, holding a scroll with an inscription. In no other picture has Albert exhibited such an union of excellences as in this,—it takes one by surprise; the conception and composition are grand, the colouring is rich and beautiful, the drapery rather broken.

XII. The Crucifixion in the Esterhazy palace at Vienna, a composition including a multitude of figures and highly finished—the design good, the drapery flowing—an excellent painting, and nearly of the same date apparently as the preceding pictures, though not equal to them.

XIII. The 'Ecce Homo,' in the chapel of S. Maurice at Nuremberg,—of Albert's best time, full of the deepest feeling and pathos—nothing trifling or finical in the hair, which in many of his pictures, both later and earlier than this, is elaborately displayed in ringlets; feeling here is paramount. There is another 'Ecce Homo' of much beauty in the Cappella Reale at Milan.

XIV. The Holy Family, in the Barberini palace, Rome,—a picture that one can look at with great delight. The Virgin lifts the veil off the infant Saviour, while S. Joseph stands by, looking on. The Virgin is evidently a portrait, but still that of a very sweet and lovely woman. Joseph's head is fine.

xv. Heads of S. Philip and S. James, in distemper, 1516,—formerly in the Imperial Gallery, now in that of the Uffizj at Florence. In a larger style than usual, and full of dignity; the hair only is too minutely finished.

xvi. The admirable portrait of Wohlgemuth, 1516, at Munich, described a few pages back.

xvii. The Suicide of Lucretia, 1518, at Munich,—a naked figure, evidently emulative of Italy—the head insufferably common-place and inferior.

xviii. Portrait of the Emperor Maximilian I., 1519, at Vienna,—admirable.

xix. Our Saviour mocked, 1520, in Count Nostitz's gallery at Prague—good; resembling the 'Ecce Homo,' above noticed, at Milan; the surrounding figures caricatured, the draperies rather more Italian.

xx. An altar-piece in the 'Vierge du Capitol,' Cologne, marked (as usual) with the monogram of the artist, and dated 1521, and painted on both sides—the front representing the Death of the Virgin, her head very ordinary, but those of the Apostles fine and dignified, the colouring rich and good, the drapery broken, but more flowing than in many of his pictures,—the reverse, the Apostles gathered round her empty tomb, one looking in, another wiping his eyes, a third actually (if we may believe our eyes) drinking consolation out of a flask of wine —or beer.—Reflecting the influence of the Flemish school during Albert's visit to the Netherlands between 1520 and 1524.

xxi. Four Saints, S. Joachim and S. Joseph, S.

Simeon and Lazarus, brother of Mary and Martha, and bishop of Marseilles—painted in 1523, now at Munich. Still more strongly betokening the influence of Flanders,—vulgar, common-place heads, narrow drapery, rich colouring.

XXII. The portrait of Jerome von Holzschuher, burgher and patrician of Nuremberg, 1526, still preserved by the family.* A head full of life and truth, and perfect in its way, in style thoroughly German, with scarcely any influence of Italy.—An excellent portrait of another patrician of Nuremberg, dated the same year, may be seen at Vienna. And lastly,

XXIII. The Apostles and Evangelists John, Peter, Mark and Paul, 1526, presented by Albert himself to the Council of Nuremberg—now at Munich; his last and (so far as single figures are concerned) his most beautiful work; the heads and attitudes are noble, especially that of S. Paul—full of ease and dignity, and the drapery is thrown with a boldness and breadth reminding one of the Florentine Fra Bartolommeo.—The last two years of Albert's life were weakened by illness, which accounts for the date of 1526 being the latest found on his existing works.

Of all Albert Dürer's merits and demerits, the richness of his imagination and exuberance of his

* Let me here express my grateful sense of the courtesy and kindness with which the daughter of that ancient house permitted me to inspect this precious heirloom of her family.

invention come first to the memory on seeking to recall his characteristics. His works are full of fancy, fraught with thought, never deficient, often overcharged with ideas, as endless in their variety as boundless in their range and association; he gathers up Nature by the four corners and feasts alike on the common and the clean,—he links together the holiest and the homeliest images, the loftiest and the most ludicrous, with an unfettered fearlessness, an unconscious simplicity, which disarms censure. It is easy to blame this when Procrustes plays the critic, but men like Albert Dürer must be taken as they are, with gratitude to God and honour from man, so long as they live to His glory and love their fellow-creatures. Albert saw nothing but what was, and painted nothing but what he saw; Nature was his model in all things, Nature as developed at Nuremberg, in healthy, robust, substantial truth; he prized the frank German smile, the modest bodice, the uncomely shoe of the humblest maiden that danced on the summer evenings round the old linden-tree, beyond the brightest blush of Italy, the most graceful curve of the Grecian Venus. Vasari needed not have lamented Albert's ignorance of the antique; the predisposition was too strong, the individuality too elastic,—he might have studied at Florence, but the influence would have been but momentary, the cushion would have risen up again and the indenture have disappeared; we see this repeatedly happen in Albert's career in regard to contemporary styles,—he is like a rock which sea after sea beats upon in

their tour round the globe; they cover him with their spray, and for a moment or two seem to devour him in their embrace, but ever and anon he reappears just where he was, unmoved and unmoveable, shaking his dripping locks and looking after the receding billows with a smile.

To this unyielding, native, Teutonic truth, this cordial sympathy and love, the sugar and the lemon in the compound of Albert's character, we must add the pure and genial alcohol, the spirit of Christian and Catholic Europe; he has little or nothing in common with the reviving paganism of the Cinquecento, sacred things are sacred to him, he was a believer in the fullest sense of the word,—it was the very intensity of his belief that figured the scenes of Palestine in the costume of Upper Germany, with a life-like reality which no mere pedant painter ever attained. He loved poetry and allegory, especially when associated with morals or Christianity, but he had little sympathy with mythology, and even purely historical subjects seem to have had but slight charm for him.

Looking closer into his individual works, we find the composition almost always excellent, the figures well disposed with reference to harmony, although symmetry is seldom thought of,—force of character rather than grace in the movements and the expression, and every face an individual and distinct existence. The design is masterly but hard,* the

* He published a work on the proportions of the human body, which has been printed in most of the European languages.

drapery for the most part angular and sharp, the colouring brilliant, but like that of noon-day in comparison with the twilight clearness of Cologne or the sunset glow of John van Eyck; the details are minutely finished, but subordinated; the landscape is pleasing, but less attractive than that of Flanders, and the figures hold a more marked supremacy over it.

Albert's genius, indeed, cannot be fully estimated without acquaintance with his engravings, and I must once more violate my exclusive principle in alluding to them. Foregoing all criticism on their technical merits, however great, I may mention in particular, the 'Knight of Death' and the 'Melancholy' as graphic poems of the deepest interest, surpassing, perhaps, in their peculiarly Teutonic vein of thought and feeling,* any thing he has left of the same description in painting. Nor are the wood-cuts, more particularly the series representing the history of the Passion, less excellent, although it is still undetermined whether more than the design be Albert Dürer's. Engraving, indeed, we should always remember, was, in those days of her early prime, an

* The sympathies of the North, or of the Teutonic race, are with Death, as those of the Southern or Classic, are with Life—with sorrow and suffering rather than pleasure and enjoyment,—sympathies, however, which lead perhaps more surely to happiness, temporal and eternal. The exquisitely beautiful allegorical tale of 'Sintram and his Companions,' by La Motte Fouqué, was founded on the 'Knight of Death' of Albert Dürer, and I cannot but think that Milton had the 'Melancholy' in his remembrance while writing 'Il Penseroso.'

art of far higher account than now, that she has settled into copyism, her inevitable destiny; she was then doing for art what printing did for letters, scattering the thoughts of the loftiest and purest minds throughout the civilized globe, to the infusion everywhere of better taste and higher principles,—and all this was effected by the manual labour of the painters themselves, the sovereigns of their generation, who thought the thoughts that they thus consigned, with more providence than the Sibyl, to leaves of immortality.

Finally, let me recommend a visit to Nuremberg if you wish fairly to identify yourself with Albert Dürer. It is not the sight of his house merely, and of his tomb,* but of the churches where he prayed, the streets he perambulated, the objects of his familiar association, not forgetting the venerable linden-tree of the Reichsveste,—even the faces that circulate round the 'Beautiful Fountain' in the Market-place, or pass and repass, like spirits, in the now so silent 'Street of Nobles,'† are medals from the same die that Nature coined from so rapidly three centuries ago; the Holzschuhers, Baumgärtners and Pirkheimers of ancient Nuremberg, of Albert's friendly fireside, still greet us in the personal presentment of their posterity, and recall his memory. With painters, as with poets, there is ever a close sympathy and correspondence between themselves and their birthplace, and Nuremberg—with her mingled air of

* In the cemetery of S. John. † The Adler-strasse.

civic grandeur and domesticity, her rich mediæval architecture, her graceful irregularity both of site and decoration—in a word, her characteristic individuality as regards nature, animate and inanimate, most picturesque, most peculiar, and preserved to the present day in all its freshness and simplicity—is the best possible commentary on Albert Dürer.

Albert's followers may be divided into two classes, those who learnt entirely from himself from the first, and adhered to his style till they gradually sank into imitators of Italy, and an elder company, much more interesting, natives for the most part of the neighbouring cities, pupils originally of other schools, and contemporaries and friends rather than scholars of the great master of Nuremberg, although they profited largely by his example. To the first class belong Hans von Kulmbach, George Pens, Henry Aldegrever and Bartholomew Beham; to the second, Matthias Grünewald, Hans Schaüffelein, Hans Burgmair, Melchior Feselen and Albert Altdorffer.

Hans von Kulmbach was the eldest and most celebrated of Albert's immediate pupils.* He had received his first instructions from James Walch, a painter of considerable merit,† whose manner, how-

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* He was apparently an elder man, figuring already as a painter in 1486. *Nagler.*

† Two portraits by Walch—one of the Emperor Maximilian I., hard but excellent, with the adventure in the mountain near

ever, he forsook entirely for that of Albert Dürer, with whom he long lived domesticated, as a friend and assistant. One of his most pleasing pictures is the Adoration of the Kings at Munich; his portrait of Jacob Fugger, surnamed the Rich, at Berlin, is admirable,* but his reputed *chef-d'œuvre*, the Virgin and Child, with attendant Saints and a little angel fiddling at the foot of the throne—painted in oils in 1513 on the North wall of the choir of S. Sebald's, at Nuremberg—is very inferior, a vulgarization of the Italian composition which it so much resembles. A Crucifixion at Vienna, similarly betraying the influence of Italy, is a more pleasing production, and still more so the allegorical oil-paintings (if I am right in ascribing them to him) on the wall of the great Council-hall of the Rath-haus at Nuremberg, there attributed to Albert Dürer. The Triumphal Car of the Emperor Maximilian, painted in 1518,† was copied from Albert's designs, subsequently engraved in 1522; the 'Calumny' is one of the most successful attempts to restore the celebrated composition of Apelles:—Calumny, urged on by Fraud, Envy and Guile, accuses Innocence (a male figure) at the tribunal of Folly, who condemns him to death at the

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Innspruck represented in the background—and one of a M. Haller, resembling the Italian style of Leonard, Francia, &c., may be seen in the collection at Munich.

* Two *volets* in the chapel of S. Maurice at Nuremberg, representing S. Joachim and S. Anna, S. Benedict and S. Wilibald, are excellent.

† According to the 'Neues Taschenbuch von Nürnberg,' tom. i, p. 63.

instigation of his councillors Ignorance and Suspicion; Punishment rushes forward with her sword, heralded by Error and Haste, to execute the sentence; Remorse follows slowly, holding forth a wand and looking sorrowfully round on Truth, who stands motionless, at the extremity of the composition, her head covered with a shield, holding the sceptre of her sovereignty in her left hand and the Sun, which brings all things to light, in her right. The heads are not beautiful but full of expression, the attitudes are easy, the drapery flowing, and the composition so clear that the idea would be understood nearly as well without description. The sculptural character of ancient Greek painting is preserved with much felicity.

George Pens also, ultimately, forsook the manner of Albert for that of Italy, aiming especially after Raphael and the naked; Tarquin and Lucretia, Lucretia's suicide, the murder of Holofernes, S. Sebastian's martyrdom, Venus and Cupid, and dances of naked children, were his favourite subjects, and treated in a manner peculiarly common-place and disagreeable—hard outlines, fat unideal forms, utterly devoid of dignity or grace. His portraits, on the other hand, are admirable; I may notice with especial praise a head at Vienna, dated 1543, and that of General Schirmer, 1545, in the 'Galerie de Lindau' at Nuremberg, both retaining a certain hardness inherited from the elder German school,—together with the portrait of an elderly man in a toque in the Lichtenstein gallery at Vienna, and that of a

youth at Berlin, both exhibiting the Italian influence and very beautiful.

Henry Aldegrever, on the contrary, has left comparatively few pictures that reward examination; his Last Judgment at Berlin is painfully anatomical, reminding one of the early pictures of Luca Signorelli, while the Virgin and Child at Munich is vulgar and tasteless to the last degree—a chubby Virgin, clumsy child and plethoric angels, gasping rather than singing their hymn of gratulation. Aldegrever was a native of Westphalia, where a peculiar school of painting had long existed, remarkable for its exaggeration of expression and its cold skeleton-like character, and not improbably, if I may venture the surmise, a lingering relic of the early Roman or Romano-Teutonic school, so frequently spoken of in the preceding pages.*

Bartholomew Beham, of Nuremberg, seems to have possessed a more decided originality than the three preceding painters; his picture of the Imposition of the Cross on the sick woman at Jerusalem, now at Munich, unites good composition and much of the Northern vigour of expression and colouring, with the flowing draperies of Italy.† Another of

* Many of the productions of this school may be seen at Vienna and Berlin, especially the works of Jarenus of Soest at the latter capital; they are not void of thought and invention, but are absolute caricatures in point of expression and general execution.

† His nephew Hans Sebald Beham became his pupil and distinguished himself in art, but his vicious manners lost him the esteem of his fellow-citizens, and smarting under their contempt,

his works, which I postpone mentioning for the present, indicates a relationship with the second and elder class of artists associated here in the train of Albert Dürer.*

Among these Matthias Grünewald and Hans Schaüffelein take precedence in point of date. Matthias was born at Aschaffenburg, according to some accounts even before Albert Dürer, and was certainly his rival so far as competition could exist between them. Many of his pictures are preserved at Munich and Mayence; they do not display much elevation or expression, and even in portrait he is extremely hard and stiff.† But Schaüffelein's works are full of feeling and character, witness a series from the lives of Our Saviour and the Virgin at Munich, and the Liberation of S. Peter in the chapel of S. Maurice at Nuremberg; his best works, a Deposition and a fresco of the Siege of Bethulia, painted in 1515, are said to be still preserved at his birthplace, Nordlingen, where he passed the greater part of his life, enjoying the highest professional and civic

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he migrated to Frankfort, where he ended his days as a tavern-keeper. He sometimes painted boors and feasts in a style anticipative of Brauwer and Ostade.

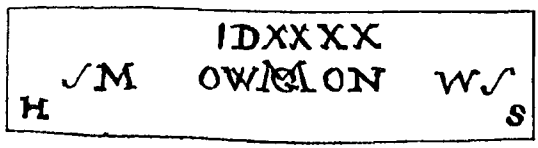
* The paintings on the folding doors of the wardrobe containing the relics in the Treasury of the Cathedral at Aix-la-chapelle are worth notice,—eight on the inside are attributed to Albert Dürer and are probably by his school; they are characterized by a truthfulness tending to caricature and vulgarity, but combined with much feeling; the most remarkable is the Pietà, representing Our Saviour standing before the cross, &c.

† His portrait of Maximilian I., his wife and family, at Vienna —hard but good—is one of the first attempts at the family-piece.

honour among his fellow-citizens.* In the Siege, he introduced the costumes and artillery of the sixteenth century, in the true spirit of self-identification which gives such vivid reality to the early graphic histories both in Germany and Italy. This too he has done in a most singular picture—if I am correct in attributing it to him on the authority of the initials H. S., in the collection of the Duca Litta at Milan.† It represents, in figures minute and numberless, scattered in various groups and actions through an immense landscape, the whole history of the Trojan War, not merely from the Judgment of Paris, but beginning, like Herodotus, from the fount of bitterness, the Expedition of Jason in quest of the Golden Fleece,—even Hercules stalks through the scene, armed cap-à-piè, like a knight or noble of feudalism. The boundless invention, the spirit and fire in the attitudes and expression, the vigour and truth in design, the strength and clearness (albeit somewhat dusky) in the colouring, the exquisite finish, and the ease withal, displayed in the execution of this pic-

* *Füssli, Künstler-Lexikon.* — Frederick Herrle, a pupil either of Van Eyck or of his school, who painted much at Nordlingen, Rothenburg, &c., where his works still remain, (*Rathgeber,*) probably exerted a certain influence on the early development of Schaüffelein and other painters of the neighbourhood.

† I subjoin the inscription, referring its interpretation to Germany:—



ture, render it one of the most extraordinary relics of the old German school, and it possesses a distinct interest as a specimen of a style of historical composition peculiarly affected by the class of artists I am now treating of, and which I am inclined to think was first brought into fashion by Schaüffelein—a style in which the figures are subordinated to the landscape in a similar manner to what we have noticed in the school of Van Eyck, although in these the flood of diminutive life overflows the foreground as well as the remoter regions; on the other hand, the multitude of figures, the vigour and concentration of their purpose, make up for the deficiency of more prominent and central groups, and hence they still preserve their character of historical paintings, and are distinguishable by this subtle but essential difference from the landscapes, similar to them in other respects, of Patenier, Van Bles and other Flemings, as yet uncommented on, who commenced their career even before the break up of the school of Van Eyck.*

Burgmair of Augsburg, the son of a painter of that city,† and the friend of Albert Dürer, has left us several pictures of this world-embracing class, great curiosities in their way. The most remarkable of them is the Defeat of Hannibal at Zama by Scipio Africanus, in the gallery at Munich, a picture

* Schaüffelein, I must add, like the whole of the preceding artists, was an excellent engraver. I would especially refer to the wood-cuts of the romance of 'Tewrdanck,' published in 1517 at Nuremberg, one of the marvels of the early German press.

† Thomas Burgmair, who was still living in 1489. *Nagler.*

strongly resembling that of the Palazzo Litta, yet hardly equal to it; hundreds of figures, all in the dress of the sixteenth century, and battling with the deadly earnestness of the age, crowd the canvas, while the distant bird's-eye landscape extends to the bay of Carthage and the Mediterranean.* Of his early paintings, in a larger style, perhaps the best are preserved in the chapel of S. Maurice and the collection in the Reichsveste at Nuremberg. His latter works betray an Italian influence; that of Venice is discernible in Queen Esther's appearance before Ahasuerus, and in the portraits of the Duke and Duchess William of Bavaria at Munich; other figures display their anatomy and some their foreshortenings too ostentatiously.

Another artist, whose recorded history is summed up in his epitaph at Ingolstadt, "In the year of the Lord 1538, the tenth of April, died the worthy and industrious painter, Melchior Feselen—may God be gracious to him!" seems to have run nearly the same career as the preceding masters. More figures, and more distinctly and elaborately finished, than many artists have distributed through the productions of a long life, are packed together in two large paintings at Munich, dated respectively 1529 and 1533, the one representing Porsenna's Siege of Rome, and including the whole history of the war, the other the Storming of Alexia, in Gallia Narbonensis, by Julius Cæsar. A third picture, of larger size, the Adoration of the

* This picture too bears a singular inscription and monogram.

Kings, in the chapel of S. Maurice, painted in the intermediate year, 1531, is anatomical and inferior.

The same minute style reappears in the representation of the Leap of Curtius by Bartholomew Beham, already mentioned among Albert Dürer's immediate pupils; crowds stand gathered round the vast smoking chasm, into which the good knight spurs in his self-devotedness. This picture reminds one strongly of the works of Feselen and Burgmair, but it is much better composed; the architecture is Italian, and flowing drapery is mingled with the German forms to which his pencil still lingeringly adhered; the colouring is light and whitish. It bears the date of 1540, the year in which Bartholomew died.

But perhaps the most elaborate of all the productions of this class is the Battle of Arbela at Munich, painted in 1529 by Albert Altdorffer, a native of Altdorff in Bavaria,* but settled at Ratisbon, where he died, a member of the Council and State-Architect, in 1539. Thousands of small figures, each finished as minutely as if alone in a world, roll, battle and mingle with each other throughout this bewildering picture, in the utmost apparent confusion; the details are endless, and the eye escapes from them only to lose itself in a wilderness of landscape—valleys, plains, mountains, capes and promontories, azure in the distance, with the sea beyond them, and islands beyond that again, still extending and ex-

* Not in Switzerland, as commonly supposed.

panding as if we gazed with Satan from the top of Niphates. This picture was taken to Paris, where Napoleon hung it in his private bath-room at S. Cloud; one can well imagine his delight in contemplating it; he too was of the few who have been offered the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them,—perhaps the islands in the distance fed his ambition by reminding him of Britain.

A picture of similar character but smaller dimensions, dated three years earlier, in 1526, and representing Susanna attired by her maidens in a green meadow, the background filled by a superb palace, with a distant blue landscape resembling the Flemish, as in all the pictures of this school, may also be seen at Munich.

Italy too cast her spell over Altdorffer, and many of his works lose much in consequence. But nowhere, save in some of Albert Dürer's own paintings, are the merits peculiar to the North so happily blended with Southern refinement as in two large altar-pieces by this artist in the Marien-kirche at Lübeck, representing the Trinity and the Adoration of the Kings, and of which the latter and the most beautiful was painted in 1518, evidently when the artist was fresh from the influence of Albert Dürer. The former picture is protected by double wings, representing, when entirely shut, the Annunciation —when half open, the four Doctors of the Church,— when completely unclosed, God the Father appears in the centre, supporting the dead body of Our Saviour, the traditional composition, surrounded by

angels and adored by a countless host of Apostles and Saints, kneeling below; while on the *volet* to the right, S. John writes his Revelations in Patmos, gazing at the Vision of the Almighty in heaven, while the fire and hail, the burning mountain cast into the sea, the shipwrecks, &c., are represented along a winding coast in the background—and on the left hand *volet*, a King and Queen kneel, adoring the Virgin and infant Saviour, who appear within a vesica piscis in the sky. The German character is still strongly prevalent in this picture, especially in the heads and the draperies, partly narrow, partly flowing like the Italian.

But the sister altar-piece* is still superior. The Adoration in the central compartment, in which the Virgin is represented seated under an arch, is less interesting than the Nativity and the Flight into Egypt on the wings, especially the former: in this the child reposes in the cradle, the Virgin worships him, little angels kneel at his head and hover in the air above him; the light issues from the child, illuminating the Virgin and the angels; Joseph, standing behind the Virgin, holds a taper, shading it with his hand, while the gleam falls on his face; behind him a streak of sunset still lights up the fading landscape and the Annunciation to the Shepherds—and lastly, a supernatural blaze of light from heaven,

* They are altar-pieces no longer, but may be found behind the choir, to the right and left of the entrance into the chapel in which Overbeck's beautiful Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem is preserved.

diffused by the miraculous star, reveals a choir of angels in the air, singing the "Gloria in excelsis." We have thus no less than four distinct lights, and all perfectly natural and harmonious. The Flight into Egypt, in the adjacent compartment, is not less pleasing,—the distant landscape is beautiful. Few German artists have equalled the sweetness and refinement of the Virgin throughout this picture—a lovely figure, with her long golden tresses; no vulgarity or coarseness offends one in any of the figures; the design is excellent, the drapery a compromise of the German and Italian, the architecture and accessaries rich and in the Cinquecento style. Everything is highly finished, but without over-minute speciality. —I rejoice to conclude my sketch of the school of Albert Dürer with so pure and beautiful a relic of early German art—with a painting to which I can give—time and opportunity of improvement made allowance for—such heart-felt commendation.

SECTION 3.—*Painters of Ulm and Augsburg—the Holbeins, &c.*

ULM, meanwhile, and Augsburg had each their distinct succession of artists, contemporary with Nuremberg. Martin Schaffner seems to have taken the lead at the former city;* his Death of the Virgin,

* Hans Muoltscher, who painted an altar-piece dated 1436, and sold in England many years ago, (*Ottley's Hist. of Engraving*, tom. i, p. 106,)* may have been the parent of the succession at

* Originally, it is said, in the Truchses collection. This painter is not mentioned either by Füssli or Nagler.

one of a series at Munich, is very sweet and pure, the composition good, the draperies less angular than usual. Hans Baldung, of Gmund, surnamed Grün, may also have learnt at Ulm; his most celebrated work is the great altar-piece in the Cathedral at Freyburg, representing the Coronation of the Virgin, dated 1516, an excellent picture in the old German style; while his Prudence on the Precipice, a small allegorical picture in the chapel of S. Maurice at Nuremberg, resembles that of the eccentric Cranach, presently to be noticed.

But Augsburg enjoys the higher reputation in virtue of the two Hans Holbeins, father and son, master and scholar—respectively her Wohlgemuth and Albert Dürer. The former was born about the middle of the fifteenth century, and was still resident at Augsburg in 1505, at which time he enjoyed the rank of citizenship. Latterly he removed with his family to Basle, where he painted the walls of the new Rathhaus, or Hotel-de-Ville. Like Wohlgemuth, his fame has been obscured by that of his more illustrious pupil, but the series of his paintings from the life of Our Saviour and the Virgin, preserved at Munich, vindicate his praise as one of the purest and most pleasing artists of the early German school. I would name, in particular, the Dedication of the Virgin, the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Adoration of the Magi and the Death of the Virgin.

Ulm.—Cramer and Bartholomew Zeitblom, of whom specimens are preserved at Munich and in the chapel of S. Maurice at Nuremberg, were contemporaries of Schaffner.

The composition is simple and beautiful, the head of the Virgin peculiarly pure and sweet, and that of Our Saviour holy and divine; the drapery is often noble, with but little of the German angularity, and yet reminding one of Cologne rather than Italy, while a deep piety and a peculiar refinement of feeling rule throughout, checking display and controlling the accessaries into due subjection to the principal object.* In this point of view he merits higher praise than may be awarded to his son, save in a very few of his best paintings.

Holbein the younger, to whom the surname is usually appropriated absolutely, as if the elder had never existed, was born at Augsburg in 1495 or 1498, and instructed by his father, along with two brothers who never rose above mediocrity. He accompanied his father to Basle when little more than a boy, assisted him in his works there, and was received into the Company of Painters in 1520. In 1526, wearied of home by the bad temper of his wife,† he visited England with letters of recom-

* In one of his later pictures, a Virgin and child, dated 1499, in the chapel of S. Maurice, he leans towards the Italian manner.

† He was a worthless character himself, so that one is inclined to be sceptical on this point. "There is a picture," says Mrs. Jameson, "still preserved in the Museum at Basle, painted about the time he left it, representing his wife and two children, half length; she has a child in her lap, and one hand rests on the head of a boy, who looks up sorrowfully in her face. It is many years since I saw this picture, and I may err in my recollection of attitude and detail, but I cannot forget that I never was so moved by any picture in my life as by this little bit of homely

mendation from Erasmus to Sir Thomas More, who welcomed him kindly, received him into his house, and procured him the patronage of Henry VIII.* He worked there three years, and returned to Basle in 1529 for three more, but in 1532 took up his abode permanently in England, only once afterwards revisiting his native country. He died at London of the plague in 1554, after a long and brilliant career—the first of the long line of portrait-painters, some of foreign, some of native extraction—the Mores, Mytenses, Vandykes, Lelys, Knellers, Jervases, Hudsons, Ramsays, Reynoldses and Lawrences —by whom the lineaments of the loveliest, the bravest and the best of each successive generation of British worthies have been handed down to posterity.

Nothing can surpass the portraits of Holbein in their peculiar style of truth, actual and unidealised; his heads are life itself, but life in repose, as the originals appeared when resting on the lowest step of their intellectual or moral ladder; the eager eye, the speaking lip of the great portrait painters of Italy, his contemporaries, seldom or never animate them; he is still the successor of Van Eyck, although excelled by Albert Dürer alone among the whole line of portrait-painters North of the Alps, prior to Rubens.

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domestic tragedy: I cannot forget the anguish depicted in the countenance of the wife, nor the pathetic looks of the children." *Handbook to the Public Galleries*, p. 170.

* For fuller particulars of this visit, see Bishop James's work on the 'Flemish, Dutch and German Schools,' p. 335.

To enumerate his *chefs-d'œuvre* in this limited line would be endless; I shall mention one only, which partakes indeed of a loftier character and is the most beautiful perhaps of all his works, the 'Burgomaster of Basle,' kneeling with his family before the Virgin, now at Dresden. The Virgin, in spite of a slight double chin, is peculiarly sweet, although not very young or virginal; the kneeling burgomaster is perfect in his way, the hands clasped, gazing upwards in devotion. Softness and richness characterise this picture to a remarkable degree, and setting aside the best of Albert Dürer's, scarcely any other production of the German school of the sixteenth century equals it in purity and beauty. Holbein would seem to have undergone just so much Italian influence previous to painting it, as sufficed to infuse into the old German feeling and style the utmost beauty they were susceptible of, for the picture is still very German and he has not in the least compromised his originality. This picture was painted, it is believed, between 1529 and 1532, and strange it is that the gleam of purer and loftier taste should have totally passed away; his later works are precisely what his earlier were, truthful but hard, like sincerity without love.

His historical paintings are little known in England, but the Adoration of the Magi, the Last Supper and the Pietà at Paris, rank among the noblest works of the elder German school, well composed, well designed, full of expression and richly coloured. He painted some pictures also in England in this

higher line of art, but they have all perished.* He was fond too of allegory,† and painted a series of subjects representing the Dance of Death in the palace of Whitehall, but which perished in the conflagration of 1697.‡

Christopher Amberger, a fellow-pupil of Holbein in his father's studio, falls likewise to be noticed here as his worthy rival, although early separated from him and less highly celebrated. His portrait of Charles V., painted at Augsburg in 1539, and pre-

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* A picture of Henry VIII. granting privileges to the Company of Barbers, is preserved in the Barbers' Hall,—and another, of Edward VI. endowing the Bridewell Hospital, in that institution. Both are ascribed to Holbein.

† Two of his allegories, representing Riches and Poverty, were painted for Merchants' Hall, London.—A curious bas-relief in wood, representing the Voyage of Human Life, in the collection at the Reichsveste, Nuremberg, is said to be carved after his design.

‡ See on this point Mr. Douce's dissertation prefixed to his 'Dance of Death,' *London*, 8vo, 1833, pp. 138–142, and also pp. 36–42 and 82–93, respectively, for a critical examination of the accuracy of common repute in ascribing to Holbein the Dance of Death formerly existing at Basle, and the design of the engravings of the same subject, much more copious and less grotesque, published originally at Lyons in 1538, and repeatedly since,—the sum of his observations resolving itself into the two conclusions, that the former, at Basle, appears to have been painted between 1431 and 1443, long before Holbein's time, and to have been utterly unworthy of him, and the latter, published in 1538, to have been designed by an artist who died in that year and who therefore cannot be Holbein, and yet whose style intimately resembles his. Mr. Douce seems inclined to identify him with a 'Georgius Reperdius,' then living at Lyons, but of whom nothing is known.

served at Berlin, though so highly esteemed by the Emperor that he presented him with a chain of gold independently of the pecuniary recompense, is excelled by that of Sebastian Münster, the Hebraïst and cosmographer, in the same collection, one of the most admirable portraits in existence and of a man worthy of such a portrait. But Amberger excelled in subjects of a far higher character;* the Trinity at Munich, the traditional composition, is a noble picture and still very German, while the Herodias receiving the head of John the Baptist, at Vienna, painted at a later period, after undergoing the influence of Leonard da Vinci, displays an originality of conception and execution seldom retained under such circumstances by converts from the North; it resembles the style of Luini, and suggests the query whether he might not claim the authorship too of the beautiful little picture representing a similar subject, in the tribune at Florence, now attributed to that painter, although some years ago it passed for a Leonard da Vinci. The sympathy indeed between the painters of Augsburg and the later school of Milan was marked and reciprocal; a portrait by Holbein at Dresden was long mistaken for one of Leonard,† and he was termed by the Italians the German Da Vinci.

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* His best works are said to exist at or near the spot of his nativity, Amberg. *Nagler.*

† A head of Sforza, Duke of Milan.

SECTION 4.—*Lucas Cranach.*

LAST on my list stands the name of Lucas Cranach, a painter whose rugged name might convey to a fanciful ear a pretty accurate conception of his characteristics. He was born in 1472, at Cranach near Bamberg, and was instructed by his father, a painter also, and not improbably, if I may venture the conjecture from the style of the son, a scion of the ancient school of Westphalia. Lucas's history may be told in few words:—He was appointed court-painter of Saxony at the early age of twenty-three, worked for three successive Electors, embraced the tenets of the Reformation, became the friend of Luther, and settled at Wittenberg, where he lived forty-six years in the highest esteem, enjoying for a considerable time the supreme office of Burgomaster, and finally dying there in 1553, aged eighty-one.

His works, scattered over Germany, are characterised by singularly original, often profound thought, coupled with an almost irresistible propensity to caricature; the composition is highly graphic but sometimes confused, the expression often very forcible, occasionally even dignified, but never beautiful; his design is for the most part careless and inaccurate, his colouring very pale, but still fresh and clear,—in a word, the thought and the purpose of his pictures far exceed their technical merit. This estimate, however, applies principally to his works of purely German character; in others he has adopted the Italian manner, yet like a mask in the carnival, to be donned

or doffed at pleasure; judging by the dates of his paintings, he seems to have worked alternately under the influence of Italy and of his hereditary prepossessions,—or if we suppose the former to have become the object of his deliberate preference, we must conclude the in-born propensity was too strong for the acquired habit, and that he repeatedly relapsed and blushed for it till he sinned again; modern critics, at least, would have pronounced an undeviating adherence to his original and native manner—virtue.

By far the most interesting of his compositions are his allegories and fancy-pieces, which are eminently original; many too of his compositions from sacred history are full of character. Two pictures, representing Death and Redemption, in the chapel of S. Maurice at Nuremberg, are remarkable for their depth of meaning. In the former the Fall is represented in the background, while in front Adam is threatened by the Devil and pierced by the spear of Death; in the other the Crucifixion is the principal subject, the Elevation of the Brazen Serpent in the Wilderness, and the Conception, according to the Valentinian heresy, occupying the background, while, to the right, Our Saviour stands in front of his sepulchre, piercing the Serpent, and in the centre the Lamb stands on the globe, holding the banner of the cross, and the Holy Ghost descends as a Dove on Adam from the wound in Our Saviour's side.

The picture of David in the desert of Ziph, in the same collection, is a fair specimen of Cranach's ordinary historical style; the young hero stands on

a projecting rock, surrounded by his companions, his hands clasped, and looking up; all are in the dress of the sixteenth century. But the Conversion of S. Paul, also there, and dated 1549, is still better; the Apostle is figured as a knight in armour, his head is excellent, noble and gentlemanly, and the expression of the horse's eye, conscious of the present deity, is admirable. Like Schaüffelein, Burgmair and their fraternity, to whom Cranach bears in some respects much resemblance, he feels a peculiar zest in painting soldiers, and gives the expression, the bearing and the costume of the character, with most life-like accuracy.

As specimens of a more varied and softened style, I may cite the picture at Dresden, representing Our Saviour blessing the little children—pleasingly painted, and less exaggerated than usual with him, for he has frequently repeated the subject, ever a favourite with Northern artists,—and the Adulteress before Our Saviour, at Munich, a picture full of life, well composed, well coloured, and bearing the mingled impress alike of his early and his acquired Italian manner; the head of Our Saviour is sweet and pleasing, that of the woman expressionless,—those of the accusers, who hold the stones ready to execute the expected sentence, are purposely caricatured.

Among his works of fancy may be named, at the risk of omitting many equally worthy of commemoration, the 'Memento Mori,' in the gallery of Cologne, representing a man leaning his head on his

hand and pointing to a skull,—the Stag-hunt at Vienna, absurd but amusing,—the Choice of Paris, dated 1530, in the palace at Rastadt, in which Paris is represented in armour, and Mercury as an old man, with a white beard,—Hercules spinning with Omphale, at Berlin, and his Battle with the Pygmies, dressed in the costume of the sixteenth century, at Dresden, a delicious picture, which might have afforded Swift a hint or two for his Adventures of Captain Gulliver.—But the most singular and entertaining of all his pictures in this style is his Font of Youth, at Berlin. A great pool or tank, fed by the miraculous fountain, adorned with statues of Venus and Cupid, appears in the centre of the composition; numbers of old women, horrid hags, are splashing about in it,—some are seen undressing, others are brought up in litters or on their husbands' backs from the left,—they enter the water and cross to the opposite bank, gradually regaining youth and beauty as they approach it, and are received, as they come out, by gallant cavaliers who conduct them to a feast spread under the trees, and thence to the dance. The gradation from ugliness to what Cranach conceived of beauty is admirably expressed, and the naïveté of the whole composition is most singular,—to a certain degree it may perhaps be considered allegorical.

Cranach's portraits, of the Electors of Saxony, of Luther, Melanchthon, &c. &c., scattered in countless numbers through the galleries of Europe, are in the oldest German style, most graphic but hard as steel.

The pictures painted in his Italian manner are much tamer and less interesting, the eccentricity pared down, the heads common and prosaic; the most numerous class of them are full-length naked figures of Adam and Eve, Venus and Cupid, Judith, Lucretia, &c., to be met with in all the old German cabinets, where in truth their appearance creates less satisfaction than their absence does surprise.* They exhibit, for the most part, very hard outlines, stiff, angular attitudes, and faces of downright ugliness; the colouring of the flesh is occasionally soft and tender, in apparent imitation of Correggio or Parmigianino, while—remarkably enough, as we shall hereafter perceive after recognising the probable descent of the school of Parma from that of Padua—we are constantly reminded, both in these and in Cranach's earlier works, of Mantegna. His resemblance, indeed, both to Mantegna and Correggio may easily be accounted for, if my conjecture as to his descent from the school of Westphalia, and that of the school of Westphalia from the original Roman school of the North, be correct,—for the Paduan school, as I long ago remarked and as we shall see more clearly in due time, was of similar Roman origin and sympathies, and the phases of development, internal and external, will be found singularly correspondent in both.—Several indeed of the paintings usually deemed Cranach's, in this latter and more Italian style, are attributable to his son of the same name, a man far infe-

* One of the best of these is the Venus and Cupid in the collection of the Reichsveste, Nuremberg.

rior to himself in original genius, but his heir in courtly and civic honours, in the Burgomastership of Wittenberg and the office of Painter to the Elector of Saxony. He died in 1586, and in him the succession ceased.*

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* I have hitherto delayed mentioning a very curious and interesting old German picture in the Museum at Cologne, which reminds me, in its various separate characters, of the early school of Cologne, of that of Westphalia, (though infinitely superior,) of Martin Schöngauer, of Memling and Quentin Matsys, and even in a faint degree, of the early school of Padua. It represents scenes from the history of S. Sebastian,—in the left wing, his conversion of the two courtezans sent to tempt him, with Marcus and Marcellianus seen in prison behind, and in the background a female kneeling to three Saints,—in the central compartment, his first martyrdom by the Mauritanian archers, with Irene and an angel extracting the arrows in the background,—in the right-hand wing, his death, beaten with clubs, with the executioners carrying his body to the *cloaca* and the vision of the matron Lucina in the background. The head of S. Sebastian, in the central compartment, is very sweet and young, almost like a girl's, with a strange resemblance to Domenichino's favourite female head,—in the left-hand wing his figure is very noble. The painter has studied anatomy; the attitudes are stiff, but there is great truth of character in the heads of the archers; the drapery is narrow and broken, though less so perhaps than is usual in the North,—there is a fondness for brocades; the landscape is primitive, like the early Cologne school; the colouring is rich and good, but with a prevailing yellow tinge; the sky, if I recollect right, is of gold,—nor is the multiplication of incidents in the background to be overlooked. Only one of the reverses of the wings could be seen when I last saw this picture; it represents the Virgin and child between S. Agnes and S. Elizabeth of Hungary, with her basket of red and white roses—the faces full, and not very elevated or beautiful. It has sometimes struck me that if any works exist of the German students at Siena, (*vide supra*, tom. ii, p. 121,) this may be one of them. I feel, however, quite at a loss how to class it.

Long before this period 'Genre' had been enthroned, in lieu of the high and historical Christian Art, throughout Germany. I have said little or nothing of the pupils of the great painters whose history we have been lately tracing; none of them equalled their masters, none are worthy of remembrance. Evil days were at hand—the soil was hardened into iron by the marchings and countermarchings of religious controversy—the dew of heaven, Imagination, ceased to water it; they were plants of promise, but few struck root, fewer bore fruit, and such as it was, the fruit withered on the bough, and a blast from the icy jaws of Reason, the wolf Fenris of the Teutonic mind, swept one and all into the Limbo of oblivion—that sole ante-chamber spared by Protestantism in spoiling Purgatory. Perhaps this was necessary and inevitable. If we would repair the column, we must cut away the ivy that clings around the shaft, the flowers and brushwood that conceal the base; but it does not follow that, when the repairs are completed, we should isolate it in a desert,—that the flowers and brushwood should not be allowed to grow up and caress it as before. But argument goes for nothing,—all such points are controlled by the hidden laws of National and Universal development—and it is on these very laws that, in art as in politics, we may base with most security our hopes and efforts for England.

SECTION 6.—*Influence of Teutonic on Italian Painting—and Conclusion.*

SUCH in its rise, such in its progress, such in its decline and fall, was the great Christian school of Painting in the North of Europe—springing, like that of Italy, (as I have repeatedly remarked,) from the impulse given to Sculpture through the study of ancient models, and in close and immediate connection with Gothic architecture—diverging from that of Italy through the gradual neglect and repudiation of the antique, through the strict imitation of Nature even in her veriest minutiæ, through that quest of the Practical rather than the Theoretic, of the Real rather than the Ideal—that prevalence, in a word, of the Subjective over the Objective—which may be considered as the ruling characteristic, the ultimate tendency of the Teutonic mind—ever prone, in proportion to the unmixed descent of the body national in which it is lodged, to worship Reason exclusively of Imagination, to sacrifice Fancy at the altar of Truth, to substitute the rule of Analysis for that of Synthesis, and to reduce all things to their smallest possible quantities and isolate them as such, till each man stands alone in creation, a God unto himself in the glory of his Individuality, and the eternal laws of Harmony and the hand that ordained them are forgotten.

Here however, as in all things, it is the excess which constitutes the mischief. So long as warmth of heart and purity of life subsist, so long as Spirit,

or the Immortal principle, reigns supreme, sin enters not, and the development, whether Individual or National, is working to a worthy end. It is thus that Science educes from the investigation of the Word of God—from Nature and the Bible—the laws of a perishing and those of an immortal universe; it is thus that History, investigating the past, discovers in it no rude chaos, but a scheme of development, physical, intellectual and spiritual, governed by a law as simple and sublime as that which propels the oak from the acorn or keeps the planets in their courses,—it is thus that Philosophy, summing up the various whole, applies it in detail to the great ends of her being, the glory of God and the guidance of Humanity on her forward path towards the goal of her aspiration, the accomplishment of her destiny. Jealousy, therefore, whether of Reason or Imagination, in the abstract, is equally absurd; they are the eyes of the Mind, each correcting the false perception of the other.

On this principle we may be permitted to look on the early Teutonic school as of equal importance with the early Italian, although so widely differing, and, with merits manifold, so much less attractive in its character. The one, it is true, walked with its gaze fixed on heaven, the other on earth, but, like the astronomer and geologist, two distinct worlds were thus revealed to them, and they gave glory to God accordingly. But as heaven and earth must be wedded ere children can be born to Abraham, so the Ideal and the Real, Imagination and Reason, must

be reconciled and blent in union ere Art can attain maturity. Hence the necessity of familiarising ourselves with the early painting of the North, no less than that of the South, during this First, or peaceful period of European art, if we would discern and comprehend the process of amalgamation which took place in Italy during the Second, or period of antagonism, and which prepared the way for the Third, or crowning period of full development and perfection, ushered in by the successive births of Leonard and Raphael, Michael Angelo, Correggio, Giorgione and Titian. It may be expedient therefore on many accounts, before closing this lengthened letter, to point out a little more minutely, even at the risk both of repetition and anticipation, the links intermediate between the two schools, the channels through which the German or Teutonic element was conveyed into the system of Italian painting.

Each of the three great branches of the Northern or Teutonic school—that of Cologne, that of the Netherlands, and that of Upper Germany—sent (as it were) its distinct ambassadors into Italy.

Those of Cologne, the earliest of these branches, or rather the mother-school of all, naturally made their appearance first. They abounded at Padua about the middle of the fifteenth century,* and it is

* The following names of German artists occur in the records at Padua,—Giovanni Teutonico, in 1441; Girolamo Teutonico and Niccolò Teutonico, 1442; Martino da Colognia da Alemagna, member of the Company of painters at Padua, 1442–5; Bartolommeo d' Alemagna, 1445; Rigo (Henry) de Germania

to them and their predecessors, if I mistake not, that Italy owes the first introduction of that rich colouring, exhibited as early as 1371 by Lorenzo Veneziano, acquired at Venice by Gentile da Fabriano in or about 1418, and by him conveyed to Florence, Lombardy and Umbria, to Perugino, Leonard and Raphael,—while at Venice herself it was transmitted by the Bellini to Giorgione and Titian. The evidence on this point appears to me remarkably strong. We find a painter named Zuan, or Giovanni, Alamanno* working in company with Antonio Vivarini of Murano, a Venetian painter, in 1445; altar-pieces of extreme beauty, executed by them jointly, are preserved at Venice,†—the colouring is glowing and rich, resembling that of the Bellini; other pictures exist, painted by Antonio apart from Giovanni, and in these the colouring is pale, with a strong preponderance of blue and white,‡—the presumption

and Giovanni de Germania, 1447, and Girolamo Teutonico, perhaps the same as the artist of that name already mentioned, 1461. *Moschini, Della Origine e delle Vicende della Pittura in Padova*, pp. 23, 24.—These artists exerted an influence on the school of Padua, as we shall see in the following Period, but its classic bias precluded the adoption of the rich colouring of the North, which took root at Venice only, as shown in the text.

* I may refer to the preceding note, in which 'Martino da Colognia da Alemagna' is mentioned, as illustrating the extensive meaning of the epithet 'Alemanno.'

† In the Academy, and in a chapel of the church of S. Zacharias. I shall speak more largely of these pictures when treating of the early Venetian school under the Second Period.

‡ The most remarkable of these is the great tabernacle or altar-piece begun by Antonio and finished by his brother Bartolommeo, now in the gallery at Bologna.

immediately arises that the former were coloured solely by the German. We find, indeed, paintings similarly coloured of an earlier date, executed by native Venetians, one for instance, by Niccolò Veneto, dated 1394,* and several, as I said above, by Lorenzo Veneziano, twenty years earlier.† But while not a vestige of such colouring occurs in the original Semi-Byzantine school of Venice, or in any other native school of Italy, at that early period, the colouring in question already existed in the North, as proved by a painting of the school of Cologne, of prior date to Meister Wilhelm, and preserved in the Museum of that city.‡ Nothing therefore can be more probable than that some painter, or possibly even some single picture imported from Cologne, may have introduced the novelty, and once admitting this, it may easily be allowed that the atmosphere of Venice, casting hues of loveliness over every thing, and the peculiar temperament of the Venetians, may have materially assisted them in carrying Colouring to a degree of richness and beauty unrivalled by any other people.

But Van Eyck also contributed to the improve-

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* A Virgin and child, in the Manfrini Gallery, with a glory of angels holding a mantle over her, and inscribed, "Nicholaus *fil. Magistri Petri pictoris de Venetijs pinxit hoc opus, qui moratur in chapite Pontis Paradixi.*" *If identical with Niccolò Semitecolo, that painter must have quite abandoned his original Byzantine style. The Virgin in this picture is very ugly and stiff.*

† In the Gallery of the Academy.

‡ Referred to above, p. 281.

ment of Colouring in Italy, and most especially so by his perfection of the art of painting in oils,—and his ambassadors too were numerous. I have already mentioned the rapture with which his works were welcomed South of the Alps; one of them, presented by some merchants of Florence to Alfonso, King of Naples, was seen by Antonello, an artist of Messina, —he started forthwith for Flanders, expressly to acquire the secret; Van Eyck liberally communicated it to him; he returned in triumph to Italy and settled at Venice,* where he imparted it to the Bellini and Domenico Veneziano; the latter painter carried it to Florence, and in a very short time it was known throughout Italy. Meanwhile various

* Doubtless Antonello deserves well of Italy, but his merits as a painter have surely been exaggerated. He possessed little originality,—he adopted in great measure the style as well as the mechanism of the North; in his crucifixion, dated 1479, in the Museum at Antwerp, the Virgin and S. John are intensely Flemish, and in the attitudes of the dying thieves he seems to have remembered the picture at Ghent by Gerard vander Meire, with whom he seems to have had nearer affinity than with John van Eyck.—Some indeed of the paintings attributed to him are of a superior character,—if the beautiful Mater Dolorosa, in the Academy at Venice, be really his, he deserves high praise, but the correctness of the ascription seems very doubtful. The leading epochs of his life are stated as follows,—his birth in 1414—his visit to the Netherlands in or about 1443, two years before Van Eyck's death—his first extant painting in oil, a Crucifixion at Utrecht, 1445—his return to Italy, 1457—his death, in 1493 or 1496. *See Nagler, Rathgeber, &c.*—Is it possible that there were two painters of the same name? It would almost appear so.[a]

[a] The family of Antonello had been painters at Messina for many generations. See the 'Memorie de' Pittori Messanesi,' *Messina*, 8vo, 1821.

Flemish artists, Roger of Bruges, Memling, Engelbrechtsen, and others, returned Antonello's visit, worked at Venice, and became the fashion there; some of the Venetian painters adopted their manner so completely as to lose every trace of nationality,* but the more independent, headed by the Bellini and the last of the Vivarini, preserved it inviolate, adopting merely and associating with their hereditary style such of the characteristics of their Northern guests as they judged desirable, and rejecting the rest. The feeling for Nature and the Domestic Sentiment were the most important of these characteristics; the former they embraced unreservedly, as witnessed by their landscape back-grounds, the latter partially, as associated with religion and blended with the former, thus preparing the way for the enchanting Holy Families and Riposos bequeathed to us by the whole succession of Venetian painters.— Nor was the intercourse less direct with Florence, partly through the works of Van Eyck and Memling, imported thither for sale, partly through the residence there of the pupil of the former, Hugo vander Goes. The same process of assimilation and rejection took place there also, although more was adopted at first and more repudiated afterwards than at Venice; the lovely landscape, the multiplication of incidents in the background, the minute delineation of oil-cloths, brocades and petty details, the richer and more harmonious colouring, mingle with

* As for example, Jacometto, repeatedly mentioned by the Anonimo, edited by Morelli.

the improved design of Masaccio and Uccello in most of the Florentine paintings of the Second period.—And the like may be said of Umbria, partly through her intercourse with Florence, partly through the influence of Gentile da Fabriano, who had improved in landscape long before, probably from the sight of some painting or paintings of Hubert or John van Eyck, or of the early scholars of the former, at Venice.—At Naples too, independently of Antonello, the influence of Van Eyck and his school may be readily recognised in the admirable fresco back-grounds of Zingaro.

Finally, at a rather later period, and in their due turn, the painters of Upper Germany came to exercise a potent influence on Italian art, especially at Florence, at first through their engravings, subsequently through the works of Albert Dürer, the favourite study of Andrea del Sarto, Pontormo and others, not excluding Raphael. Nor were Schaüffelein and his companions, the peculiar class of historical painters in small, or the artists of Augsburg, unappreciated or unimitated, either at Venice or in Lombardy.

Colouring, therefore—Landscape, as founded on the laws of aërial perspective—Individuality and the Domestic Sentiment, with all they lead to of good and evil—and the art of painting in Oils, sum up the contributions of the North to the common treasury of European Christian Art. During the whole process of development and intercommunication, the Italians, watching each new birth of Transalpine

genius as it descended among them, self-confident and secure, as if it could walk the world alone, welcomed it kindly, tested it fairly, either rejected or naturalized it according as they found it worthy, and ultimately, when all the various elements, native and exotic, had been assembled together and were quarrelling for precedence, assigned their due rank and relationship to all parties by introducing the Ideal of Mind into her proper place between Spirit and Matter, thus fusing and reconciling the three into one; Leonard, Raphael and Michael Angelo then walked forth in their majesty, and Painting was perfect,—or as nearly so, at least, as aught human can typify the mysterious triangle of Christ's perfection.

Of the subsequent reaction on the Northern school —of the apostacy of the three great Christian successions of Flanders, Holland and Upper Germany—of the perpetuation of the Flemish branch, thus degenerated, in connection with Catholicism—of the extinction of the Dutch in connection with Protestantism, and of that of Germany in the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—and, finally, of the separate vivification and independent flourish of all the various inferior departments of painting, shooting up like suckers after the tree had been cut down, or rather setting up for themselves and rising to glory, one after the other, like kingdoms and cities on the breaking up of an empire, I have spoken sufficiently already,—and, as regards the latter point, will only repeat that this dismemberment and continued independent existence

and development were inherent in the very essence of oil-painting—a legacy of power and pledge of perfection unlimited to all the secondary branches of the art, charming in themselves but (beyond a certain point) degrading to fresco, and far beyond the resources either of it or distemper; we have found, accordingly, every one of these branches foreshadowed in the works of the inventor of oil-painting, John van Eyck. I do not intend to trace their history till I have brought these sketches of the high Christian art to a conclusion, but thus far I must necessarily anticipate—that, even long before the great Northern apostacy, individual artists, Jerome Bosch, the elder Breughel, Peter Aertsen, and others, had started on the several lines alluded to, and become popular in Italy—and that the landscape-painters, in particular, of Flanders, and their successors, lived in close and continual commerce with the Italian artists, benefiting and conferring benefit, for at least two centuries afterwards. They rank under two schools—that of Antwerp, painters in oils, springing from Joachim Patenier and Henry van Bles,* the Civetta of the Italians, and continued through the Mostaerts, the Cocks, Van Gassel, Grimmaer, &c., to Paul Brill,

* Some pictures by these artists, in which the figures are much larger than usual and the landscape is proportionally diminished, deserve the name of historical pictures; the Flight into Egypt by Patenier and the Annunciation by Civetta, both at Munich, may serve as examples. In the latter the head of the Virgin is very sweet and pure; she is represented in her chamber or boudoir-bedroom, sumptuously furnished, the hangings, lustres, draperies, &c. finished with the minuteness of Gerard Dow.

Denis Calvart and Velvet Breughel—and that of Malines, workers chiefly in distemper, and numbering among their tribe Martin van Valkenburg, Hans Bol, James and Roland Savary, and Albert van Everdingen. Almost all these artists studied in Italy and aimed at ideal, or poetic landscape, as their Dutch contemporaries (who exerted little or no influence on the South) did at the delineation of simple nature; they delighted, like their forefathers, Van Eyck and Memling, in the far-stretching bird's-eye landscape and the azure distance, in finishing every leaf of their trees, every petal of their flowers, and in peopling their scenes with an infinity of minute figures associated in some scriptural or mythological action, but subordinated to the landscape, so as to constitute (as I remarked before) their distinctive difference from the paintings of Schaüffelein, Burgmair, Feselen and Altdorffer, to which they bear otherwise a marked resemblance. Their influence on the progress of art, even during her Third and later periods, may be appreciated by the simple facts, that Agostino Tassi and Claude derive their succession from Paul Brill, and the Carracci, Domenichino, &c., theirs, as regards landscape, from Denis Calvart—the original instructor, not merely in landscape but design, of almost all the most celebrated masters of the later, or eclectic school of Bologna.*

* I have said nothing here of the influence of the North on Spanish art, as it was very trifling previous to Albert Dürer's time, although Flemish painters were constantly employed in the peninsula.

And here I conclude this First and opening Period of European Christian Art—commencing, as you may remember, with the Lombard and Gothic Architecture, both North and South of the Alps—continued through the schools of Niccola Pisano in Sculpture, of Giotto in Dramatic, of Siena, Orcagna and Fra Angelico in Contemplative Painting, of Bologna, and finally, of Germany and the North—on which latter subject I have said sufficient (I trust) to secure a fair appreciation of Teutonic art, regarded exclusively as such, and of its share in bringing about the perfection of painting in Italy. The curtain may now fall—to rise again in due time, and display the rival hosts of Imagination and Reason drawn up in battle array, and preparing for the great struggle of the Cinquecento.

POSTSCRIPTUM.

I CANNOT dismiss these volumes without a word of appeal to the rulers of Italy in behalf of the grand old frescoes which are either perishing unheeded before their eyes, or that lie entombed beneath the whitewash of barbarism, longing for resuscitation, pining for the light of day.

By a natural but most unfortunate casualty, the best works of the early painters being generally in more conspicuous and desirable places than those done in their youth, they were the more liable to perish, the rage for novelty destroying in each successive generation the works of the preceding one in order to substitute its own. It is thus that sometimes two or three frescoes are found painted one over the other in Italy.* It was thus that the frescoes of Perugino, of Signorelli, and others, in the Sistine Chapel and in the Stanze of the Vatican, were thrown

* It was so too in the times of Classic art. In an old Greek house at Alexandria, just disinterred and in the process of demolition by the Turks, I observed no less than four coats of painting on the wall of the principal hall, one beneath the other, and the lowest the best; one of them represented scenes from Homer,—the names were inscribed over the figures as on Etruscan vases.

down to make room for those of Raphael and Michael Angelo. When minds like these are in question, the consolation is obvious—we have got better in exchange; but when we read of similar devastations in favour of the Vasaris, Perino del Vagas, &c., of the decadence, the case is different, and one could weep for very despite.

What a scene of beauty, what a flower-garden of art—how bright and how varied—must Italy have presented at the commencement of the sixteenth century, at the death of Raphael! The sacrileges we lament took place for the most part after that period; hundreds of frescoes, not merely of Giotto and those other elders of Christian Art, but of Gentile da Fabriano, Pietro della Francesca, Perugino and their compeers, were still existing, charming the eye, elevating the mind and warming the heart. Now alas! few comparatively and fading are the relics of those great and good men. While Dante's voice rings as clear as ever, communing with us as friend with friend, theirs is dying gradually away, fainter and fainter, like the farewell of a spirit. Flaking off the walls, uncared for and neglected save in a few rare instances, scarce one of their frescoes will survive the century, and the labours of the next may not improbably be directed to the recovery and restoration of such as may still slumber beneath the whitewash and the daubs, with which the Bronzinos and Zuccheros "et id genus omne" have unconsciously sealed them up for posterity—their best title to our gratitude.—But why not begin at once? at

all events in the instances numberless, where merely whitewash interposes between us and them. And what are those "Dii minores," that their works should be respected when those of the Titans of old time lie concealed behind them? Europe would hail such discoveries as the disinterment of another Pompeii, and a stream of pure refreshment would flow forth for mankind from the walls thus struck by the rod of authority, as of yore from the rock in Horeb.

It is easy to reply—what need of this? They—the artists—have Moses and the prophets, the frescoes of Raphael and Michael Angelo—let them study them. Doubtless,—but we still reply, and with no impiety—they will not repent, they will not forsake their idols and their evil ways—they will not abandon Sense for Spirit, oils for fresco—unless these great ones of the past, these Sleepers of Ephesus, arise from the dead.

A grave and unsuspected fallacy is involved in such a remonstrance. It is not by studying art in its perfection—by worshipping Raphael and Michael Angelo exclusively of all other excellence—that we can expect to rival them, but by re-ascending to the fountain-head—by planting ourselves as acorns in the ground those oaks are rooted in, and growing up to their level—in a word, by studying Duccio and Giotto that we may paint like Taddeo di Bartolo and Masaccio, Taddeo di Bartolo and Masaccio that we may paint like Perugino and Luca Signorelli, Perugino and Luca Signorelli that we may paint

like Raphael and Michael Angelo. And why despair of this, or even of shaming the Vatican? For with genius and God's blessing nothing is impossible.

I would not be a blind partizan, but, with all their faults, the old masters I plead for knew how to touch the heart. It may be difficult at first to believe this; like children, they are shy with us—like strangers, they bear an uncouth mien and aspect—like ghosts from the other world, they have an awkward habit of shocking our conventionalities with home truths. But with the dead as with the living all depends on the frankness with which we greet them, the sincerity with which we credit their kindly qualities; sympathy is the key to truth—we must love, in order to appreciate. The world is indeed full of spirits, singing ever and eloquently to the soul, but, like the music of the spheres, the ear must be attuned, the heart unsealed ere we can hear their voice—and even then if we say hush! to the uninitiated, they too often listen in vain—the song is inaudible to them, and therefore they deem us mad. But we hear it all the same. Faith, Hope, and Charity, then, must be the bridesmaids of Christian Art—Faith in the inspiration of our fathers of old time—Charity to cover the multitude of their technical sins—and Hope that maketh not ashamed, to steady our upward flight into their airy region, and prompt in every interview with the mighty minds of old the blissful, thankful self-reminder of conscious power, 'Anch' io son pittore!'

There is indeed a wealth of thought and feeling stored up in these old sculptures and frescoes, at first sight so unpromising; they remind one of the beneficent fairies who appear to us disguised as withered hags, but bestow diamonds and pearls on the discreet maidens who accost them with becoming reverence. Let any young painter or sculptor, thoroughly accomplished in the mechanism of his art, in which these his predecessors were so deficient, but drawing his inspiration from Christianity and the Romano-Teutonic nationality of Europe—let any such young artist, I say, visit Italy so prepared—tossing to the winds the jargon of the schools, content to feel and yield to the impulses of a high, and pure, and holy nature, and disposed, with God's blessing, like Fra Angelico or Perugino, to dedicate his talents, as the bondsman of love, to his Redeemer's glory and the good of mankind—let him so come, I repeat, and commune with these neglected relics of an earlier, a simpler, and a more believing age—talk to the spirit that dwells within them in its own universal language; ask it questions, and listen reverently for a reply—and he will gain more than a mere response —that spirit will pass into his own bosom—his eyes will be touched as with the magician's salve, and he will find himself in a world of undreamt of beauty, hitherto unseen only because inadequately bodied forth—a world of bright spirits, beings of the mind —ideas as yet only half-born (as it were), but which will throng around him on every side,

"Demanding life, impatient for the skies,"

for that life of immortality which his practised hand can so well bestow. Yes!—of this world of spiritual beauty, he, happy man! may become the priest and the interpreter, by adopting in the first instance, and re-issuing with that outward investiture which the assiduous study of all that is beautiful, either in Grecian sculpture, or the later but less spiritual schools of painting, has enabled him to supply, such of its bright ideas as he finds imprisoned in the early and imperfect efforts of art—and secondly, by exploring further on his own account in the untrodden realms of feeling that lie before him, and calling into palpable existence visions as bright, as pure, and as immortal as those that have already, in the golden days of Raphael and Perugino, obeyed their creative mandate, Live!—Let a few such artists arise among us, and the nineteenth may yet rival the fifteenth century. And why doubt it? Germany has done much already — England may do much, possibly more—and our hope is, that Italy, the mother of one half of our intellectual culture, whose children are as our elder brethren, and whose speech is to our ear like

> "the bells of Fatherland,
> Chiming as one flies from them o'er the wave," *

will favour us with her smile—will sanction (to revert to the object of this parting 'Envoi')—will

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* 'Edward the Black Prince,' by Sir Coutts Lindsay.

sanction, through the fiat of her rulers, the prayer of England and of Europe for the resuscitation, so far as is practicable, of those treasures of Art, her neglected heritage, which lie concealed under the dust and ashes, the whitewash, and the pictorial iniquities of the last three centuries.

CORRIGENDA.

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Page li, line 21, *lege* 'rèeds. Which.'—P. lii, lowest l., *l.* 'sickness. Which.'—P. cvi, penult. l., *l.* 'as Dionysius.'—P. cxlviii, l. 20, *l.* 'her caresses.'—P. clxxx, l. 3 from bottom, *dele* 'the.'—P. cxci, l. 6 from bottom, *lege* 'more.'—P. 100, l. 18, *l.* 'of the Patriarchs and of the Israelites.'—P. 108, l. 7 from bottom, *l.* 'work.'—P. 124, l. 19, *l.* 'compositions.'—P. 137, l. 10, *l.* 'stiff.'

VOL. II.

Page 33, line 2, *lege* 'Fra Sisto.'—P. 71, l. 20, *l.* 'volume of his history.'—P. 76, l. 8 from bottom, *l.* 'came down.'—P. 92, l. 4, and p. 119, l. 22, *l.* 'Masuccio.'—P. 139, l. 8, *l.* 'distinguishing.'—P. 190, l. 24, *l.* 'the Bargello.'—P. 235, l. 3 from bottom, *l.* 'destruction.'—P. 340, l. 4 from bottom, *l.* 'S. James the Greater.'—P. 350, l. 20, *l.* 'caricatured. With these.'

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Page 39, line 4, *lege* 'wand.'—P. 71, l. 23, *l.* 'which are the offspring of intellect.'—P. 72, l. 6, *l.* 'the Presentation, painted for the Duomo.'—P. 78, l. 5, *l.* 'much superior.'—P. 99, l. 11, *l.* 'chuesta.'—P. 106, l. 19, *l.* 'resembled.'—P. 170, l. 23, *l.* 'texts.'—P. 355, l. 6, *l.* 'the loaf, (in the Lichtenstein gallery at Vienna,) is.'—P. 360, l. 4, *l.* 'dedication.'—P. 384, l. 4, *l.* 'these early.'—P. 387, l. 13, *l.* 'adheres.'

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